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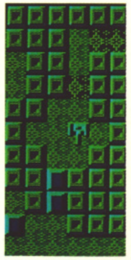

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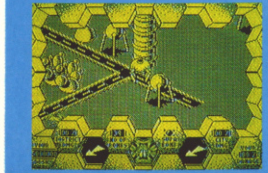

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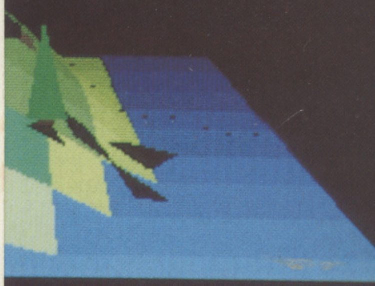

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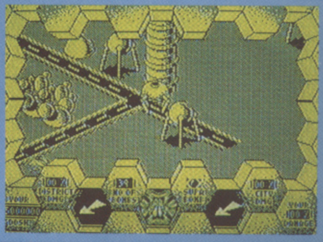

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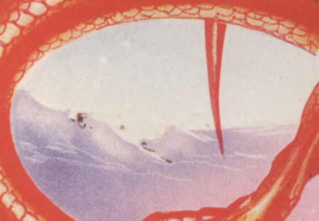

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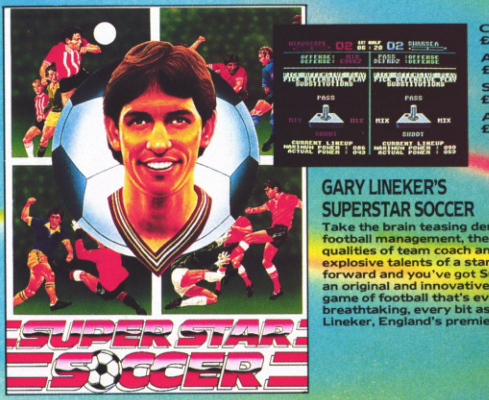

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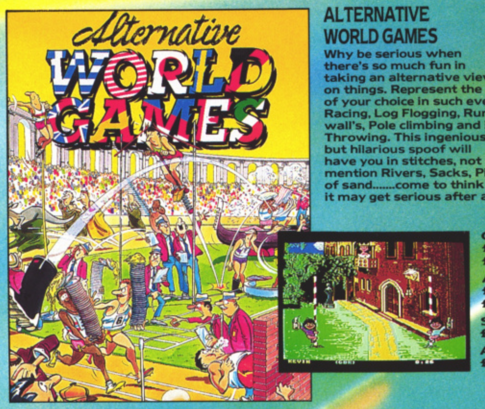

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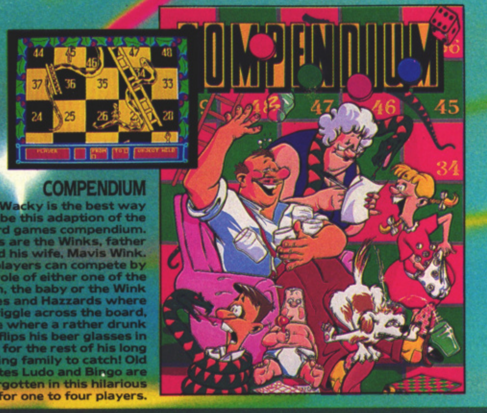

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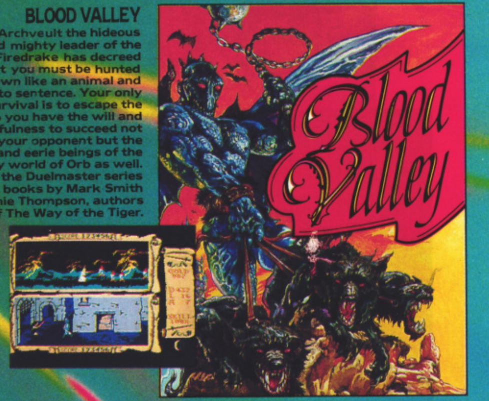

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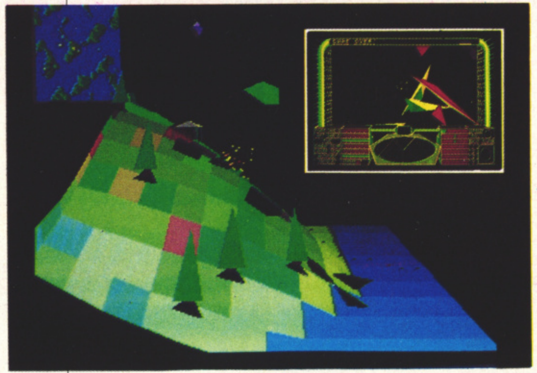

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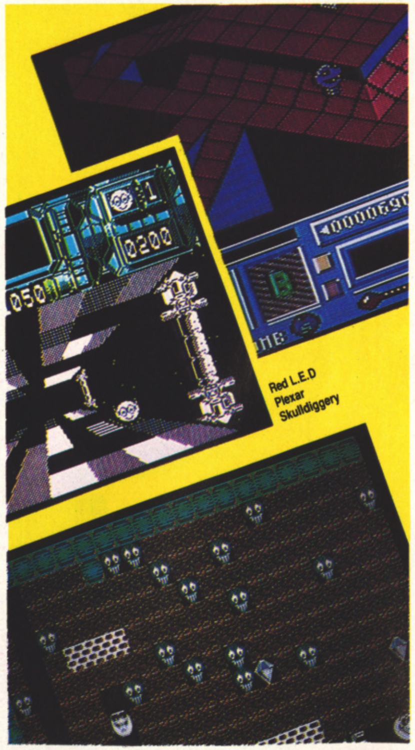

Red L.E.D
Plexar
Skulldiggery

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Five pages of the tricks, tactics and pokes that can get you further up the high-score table. Including step-by-step guide to playing **XOR**, and a veritable bonanza of pokes.

BUY LINES

104...........................Special Offers
ACE mail order offers you **amazing** bargains – up to £4 discount on some games. Don't miss out.

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Knock another 10 quid off those mail order bargains when you subscribe to ACE. Don't be a chump; get on to it **NOW!**

COMPETITION

14.......................Two Grand Slam!!
Win FREE software for a YEAR from the Telecom Soft range – and that means Rainbird, Firebird and Firebird Silver. It could be worth over £500 each to four lucky readers. Don't miss out!

Dear ACE,

I give up. Issue 1 was bad enough – how you managed to get two free complete games on the cover is totally beyond me. And now you go and shove a playable demo of Bubble Bobble on the cover of Issue 2! What am I supposed to do? Start a launderette? Take a slow boat to China? Are you trying to put me out of business?

What really makes me sick, though, is the stuff you actually print. Just because those Connors, Cookes and Wiltons have been around since day one of computer entertainment, does that give you the right to exploit them so mercilessly in filling your pages with such horribly authoritative reviews? With such sickeningly brilliant tips? With such diabolically insightful features?

And that's not even counting that sparklingly vivid look at solid-3D games, or the astonishing Pilgrim's guide to Hitchhikers, or....

I've had enough. Please send me the next twelve copies of ACE and give me a special £10 subscriber discount off my copy of *Mutant Trainspotters Go Ape On Rambo Mountain.*

Yours sincerely,
Ädrian Frightful,
Publisher of Yesterday's Computer Entertainment

Since this is a serious magazine, we will be doing our best to give all our readers what they want, including Mr Frightful. We draw the line, however, at including games like *Mutant Trainspotters* in our special offers section.
The Editors

20..................................Cover cassette
Full instructions on loading and playing those five fabulous screens from *Bubble Bobble.*

Advanced Computer Entertainment ● **Future Publishing, 4 Queen Street, Bath, BA1 1EJ** ☎ **0225 446034, Fax 0225 446019, Telecom Gold 84:TXT152, Prestel/Micronet 045 874 011** ● **Co-editors** Peter Connor, Steve Cooke ● **Reviews Editor** Andy Wilton ● **Staff Writers** Dave Packer, Andy Smith ● **Art Editor** Trevor Gilham ● **Publisher** Chris Anderson ● **SUBSCRIPTIONS & SPECIAL OFFERS** Carrie-Anne Porter, **The Old Barn, Somerton, Somerset TA11 7PY** ☎ 0458 74011 ● **COLOUR ORIGINATION** Wessex Reproduction, 352a Wells Road, Bristol BS4 0QL ● **DISTRIBUTION** SM DISTRIBUTION, 16/18 Trinity Gardens, London SW9 8DX ☎ 01-274 8611/5 ● **PRINTING** Chase Web Offset, Plymouth ● © Copy right FUTURE PUBLISHING LTD 1987 ● No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form without our permission.

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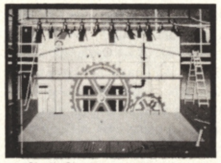
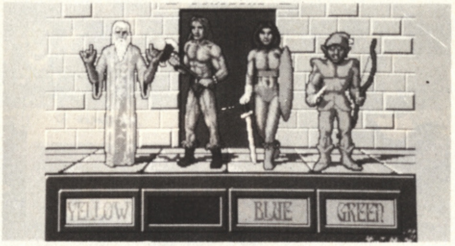
ACE NEWS

US GOLD'S CHRISTMAS CRACKERS

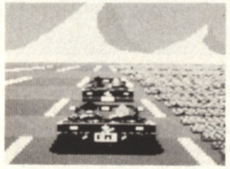
Charlie Chaplin in *City Lights*: can he bring it in on budget?



Charlie Chaplin: assembling the backdrops on the ST.



Gauntlet II: the ST character selection screen.



Out Run: an impressive Amstrad mock-up, but what'll it move like?

Xmas is coming, and US Gold plan to be ready for it. They've got some heavyweight licensing deals, a couple of big sequels and a stockingful of coin-op conversions, all due out between now and you-know-when.

With *Gauntlet*'s forthcoming appearance on US Gold's blockbusting Xmas compilation *Solid Gold*, it'll be replaced as a full-price title by the potentially even bigger *Gauntlet 2* – based on the coin-op sequel it'll have a host of extra features to attract the slash and grab crowd. The similarly compiled *Infiltrator* will be replaced by *Infiltrator II - The Next Day*, which features three more missions for the heroic McGibbits. The good news here is that *Infiltrator I* owners (and *Solid Gold* buyers for that matter) can get the extra missions alone at a very reasonable £5 off. Shame they couldn't do a similar upgrade for *Gauntlet*, really.

The real heavy hitters in Gold's Xmas line-up should be their new coin-op licences. They've got *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* for all you bullwhip fanatics out there, and the really rather violent *Rygar* should also be surfacing across all major formats very soon. Rather nearer Xmas we can expect the smash hit skateboard-em-up *720 Degrees* – though how they'll manage without those special controllers isn't too clear – and the monstrously successful road-race game *Out Run*. Amstrad and C64 demos of the latter look promising, but it's still too early to tell whether the 8-bit micros will be up to a decent *Out Run* conversion.

Last, but by no means least, US Gold have pulled out all the stops in their bid for the 'Weirdest Licensing Deal' award by tying up games agreements on no less than three dead people. Not such obvious winners as films or coin-ops you might think, but US Gold reckon that the dead people in question – Charlie Chaplin, Marilyn Monroe and James Dean – should be worth a bob or two for them. First in line for "conversion' is Charlie Chaplin, but Gold have confounded industry cynics by coming up with a relevant and even tasteful game.

Rather than the *Jet Set Charlie* the Chaplin license immediately suggests to most people, the first game to come from the deal will be a film industry arcade adventure.

The player must finance, produce and direct some of Chaplin's best known pictures, starting with the classic City Lights. ST screen shots look very impressive, and the monochrome theme should lend itself nicely even to the Spectrum. Looks like tasteful stuff – but bear in mind the fact that US Gold haven't definitively ruled out some kind of platform game.

FIRING UP THE AMIGA

Firebird have some good news for Amiga owners with the planned launch of their classic game *Sentinel*. Work will soon be in progress on this, their first Amiga product. The ST version of this game was very neat indeed, so the Amiga ought to be a real treat. It's good to see Firebird putting some commitment behind Amiga as well as the ST.

EYE EYE

Every week for what seems like the past few months 'teasers' have been pouring in to the ACE offices, all of them bearing images of an eye. The PR source of these resolutely refused to say what it was all about. Now, at last, it can be revealed; *Eye* is the computer game of *Eye*, the brand new board game – whose creators expect it to be the next Mastermind or Trivial Pursuit.

Eye, its creators claim, can be played by anyone from 7 years upwards; yet, they say, it can be more complex than chess. The board game consists of concentric circles changing patterns as they revolve. The colours of the players' counters correspond to some of the colours on the board, and the aim is to control your own colour. Sounds pretty baffling. Both 8 and 16-bit micro versions are coming real soon from Endurance Games.

COMMODORE GET THE BLUES

3 SEPTEMBER 87
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The lads line up with that bumper cheque; you'd think they could have pulled their socks up.

'Come on you blues!' is likely to be the rallying cry of anyone working for Commodore UK following a £1.25 million sponsorship deal signed with Chelsea FC. For three years the Chelsea team will wear the Commodore name and logo on their shirts. That's going to be pretty good for Commodore if Chelsea win lots of matches, do well in the FA Cup and get themselves on the telly a lot. But who'd want to be the man who put pen to cheque if Chelsea manage to get relegated to the Third Division in successive seasons? Soccer can be a funny old game, Brian.

Soccer sponsorship is nothing new to the Amiga boys; Commodore Germany already sponsor Bayern Munich and – pretty weird, this – Dynamo Kiev, on their forays into western parts. Will Atari follow suit ? Are Rochdale set for the soccer sponsorship deal of the century? Probably not, but watch this 'sponsorship space' anyway.

TELLY GAMES

Domark's new label TV Games is set to bombard you with the prog of the prog. Launched at the PCW Show is *Treasure Hunt*, based on the Anneka Rice helicopter quiz show. This is to be followed by *Krypton Factor*, a micro-version of the superbeing programme. Domark are also resuscitating *Bullseye* and *Countdown*, two more quiz game programs that were originally released by the now defunct Macsen. We are informed that these last two are being upgraded.

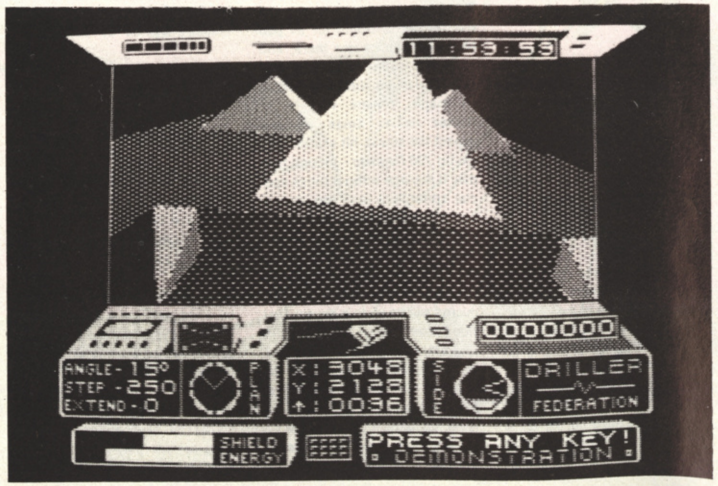
VIRGIN'S DOLL

Yet another game of the doll. Following *Mask*, *Centurion*, *Masters of the Universe*, *Transformers* and *Gobots*, Virgin are finally getting in on the act with *Action Force*, a game based on the manipulable toy.

Programmed by the Gang of Five, *Action Force* takes place on the island of Botsneda (silly name, that is), where the enemy COBRA (nasty name, that is) have mounted a surprise attack on allied forces. The Action Force team have to rescue a hard disk left behind in the ensuing panic. The game should be available some time in October for Spectrum and C64.

DRILLER UPDATE

Latest *Driller* screenshots from Incentive show just how close the first Freescape game is getting to solid, playable reality.



BERMUDA PROJECT

Not a nice little holiday in the sun. Instead Mirrorsoft drop you right in the middle of the Bermuda Triangle, that mysterious portion of the Atlantic that has spawned more 'amazing mystery' books than the Creation. You play a reporter - lucky old you - dropped an island which is made up of numerous 'time pockets'. You have to use your skills to move around and, presumably, get back to file your story. £24.95 on ST, out mid-October.

CENSORED!

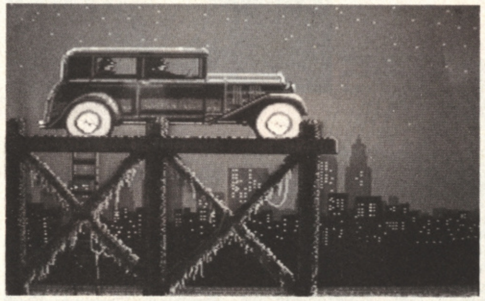
German computer users may have fun hacking their way into NASA databases, but they won't get quite so far hacking people's heads off from now on. Palace Software's slice'n'dice-em-up *Barbarian* has just fallen foul of West Germany's Bundesprufstelle Fur Jugendgefahrdende Schriften – the federal organisation responsible for testing youth-endangering publications – and cannot now be sold there to anyone under 18.

The Bundesprufstelle previously hit the news for banning the MicroProse submarine simulation *Silent Service* – too militaristic, it seems – but it was the violence in *Barbarian* that they took issue with. Palace's response to the banning was surprisingly low on outrage: as with the controversy over Maria Whittaker's scantily clad presence on the inlay, it seems that any publicity is good publicity.

The same goes for CRL it seems with their latest St Brides adventure *Jack the Ripper*. Unusually for St Brides the game should be taking a serious view of its grisly subject matter, which should make it gruesome stuff indeed. The signs are that CRL will submit the game for certification as a home video, repeating the publicity stunt of their *Dracula* launch. Whether they'll get another 15 certificate for their trouble remains to be seen, but they're bound to get some publicity mileage out of it – they're already claiming that *Dracula* 'was so horrific that it had to be censored'!

ANTI-HERO

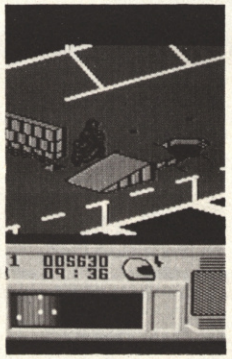
Sick of being Mr. Nice Guy? Mirrorsoft's *King of Chicago* - £24.95 on the Amiga - will give you the opportunity to topple Al Capone from his perch as boss of the windy city's mobsters. How you indulge your nasty nature after that is unclear.



Let's hope that limo don't move no further.

MIRRORSOFT'S MEAN STREAK

No, we're not saying they're a miserable bunch of skinflints, just informing you that they're producing a game called *Mean Streak*, featuring killer bikes and a lot of mayhem. The game's due out mid-October on Spectrum and C64, ST by Xmas and Amiga shortly after. Mirrorsoft will be running a competition on the game giving you the chance to win a mountain bike.



Look out for that hole in the road chum!

UP'N'COMING

T-Minus 10 and counting...

Origin systems look set to send you to the stars around Christmas time with the release of a space strategy game called *2400 A.D.* Price is as yet unknown as is the exact release date but according to Colin Bastable - Microprose's new marketing manager - the game is "well advanced and looking good". Microprose themselves are also planning to release a space simulation game at about the same time but, again, details have not yet been disclosed. The fun doesn't stop there though because Origin are also planning to release a Basketball simulation game called *Home Court* in the run up to Christmas.

Getting offensive down under

PSS, the strategy and wargame simulation people, are planning to release a number of games from the Australian Strategic Studies Group. The titles will include *Battles in Normandy*, which will be a wargame set in Europe in the Second World War. *Russia - The great war in the east* will be in a similar vein, but a different location. *Battle Front* is another WW2 wargame and *Europe Ablaze* is a wargame based upon aerial operations. *Carrier at War* is another wargame, this time set on board an aircraft carrier 'somewhere in the pacific' and finally *Reach for the Skies* is an inter-stellar colonisation game. All titles will be released on the C64 (disk) with a probable price of £24.95.

Hewson's Plus for Plus 3

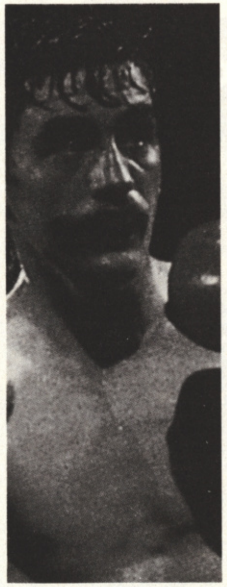
While the future of the Spectrum +3 still looks a little shaky, some companies are taking the lead and plan to release titles on disk for the machine. One such company is Hewson who are hoping to please a lot of people this December with the release of a powerful compilation of best selling games such as *Exolon, Zynaps, Ranarama and Uridium Plus*. Prices start at £8.95 for Spectrum tapes and £12.95 for the +3 disk. C64 and Amstrad versions will cost £9.99 and £14.95 on cassette and disk respectively.

If you can't wait 'till December then Hewson also plan to release a shoot - em up called *Nebulous* which promises to be a 'fantastic looking game' in November. Prices are fixed at £7.95 for the Spectrum cassette with a +3 disk version possible but not yet decided. C64 owners can expect to pay £8.95 for a cassette and £12.95 for a disk version of the game.

TIDDLE THAT WINK

Gremlin's *Compendium* will offer a wacky arcade adventure game based on those classics of the board Snakes and Ladders, Ludo and Tiddlywinks. Your host for this unusual entertainment are the EyWinks - pop Tiddly and mom Mavis. You take the role of one of the four Wink kids, the Wink baby or the Wink dog. *Compendium* should be around towards the end of November on Spectrum, Amstrad and C64.

AUTUMN ALL SPORTS



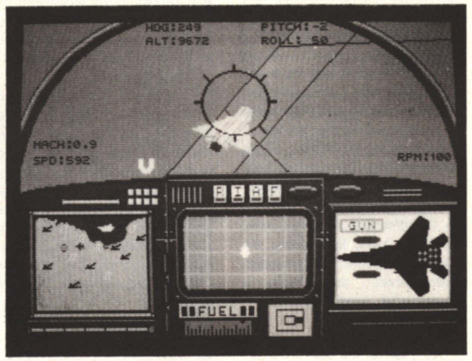
This autumn sees a vogue for compilations - a vogue that Ocean are not to be left out of. They're bringing you (and we quote) 'a bumper sporting compilation pack of 10 games.' This will feature over 20 sporting events and will have the imaginative title of *Game, Set & Match*.

For the C64/128, spectrum, and Amstrad the pack gives you such sporting classics as *Hypersports*, *Barry McGuigan's Boxing, Ping Pong, Jonah Barrington's Squash*, and *Super Soccer* among others. All this for a price of £12.95 cassette or £17.95 disk.

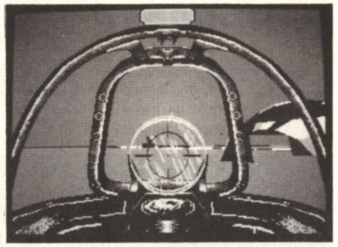
TALLY HO VS. GUNG HO

Strap on your goggles and it's chocks away, chaps! That evergreen WWII flight simulator Spitfire '40 is coming out for the ST, courtesy of Vickers-Supermarine fans Mirrorsoft. You'll now be able to defend South-East England from Nazi bombers in 16 glowing colours - the cockpit interiors in particular look very impressive - so wouldbe Douglas Baders can start polishing their tin legs right away.

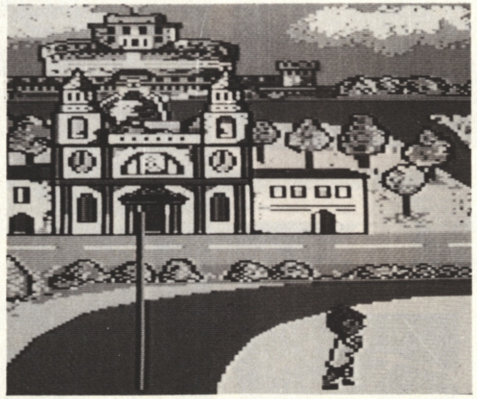
If all this talk of snicking the Hun's bails strikes you as poor foreign relations on an international machine like the ST, just wait till you get hold of F-15 Strike Eagle. Now you can bomb, strafe and dogfight your way across the Middle East on your ST, thanks to Major Bill Stealey's very own MicroProse. The game offers seven different missions over Libya, Iran, North Vietnam and a few other places Major Bill doesn't like very much. There's a positive embarassment of weaponry on offer, plus the realistic controls and complex instrumentation we've come to expect from the sim specialists.



Taking on a Libyan Sukhoi fighter over the Gulf of Sirdar in your trusty F-15.



Spitfire '40: no head-up displays on this one, chaps!



Alternative Games competitor, looking lost in Italy

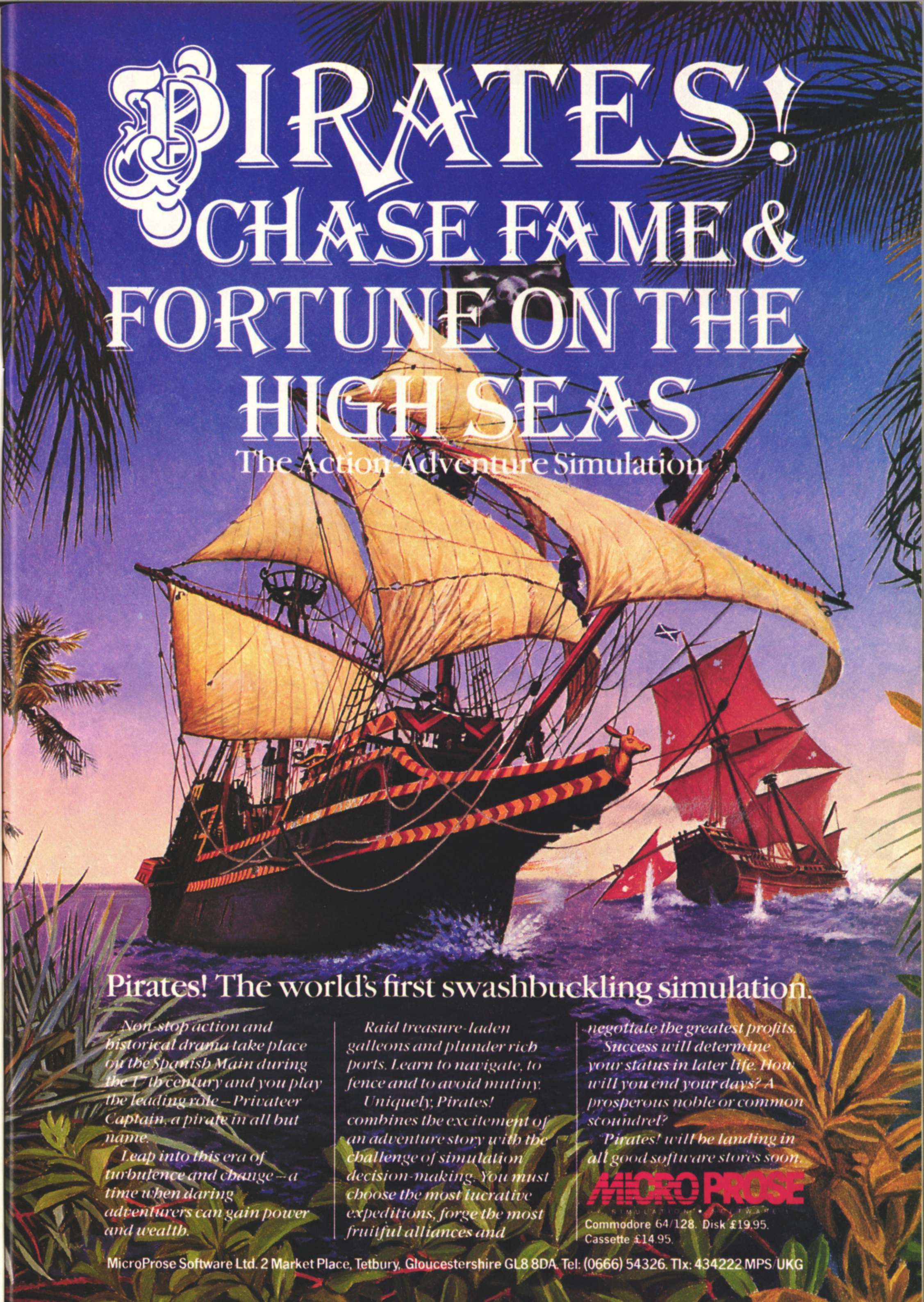
ALTERNATIVE GAMES

Sick to death of all those sports programs? Looking for something just that smidgeon different? Gremlin's 'comical sports spoof' *Alternative Games* may possibly provide the answer.

The traditional events include sack racing, boot throwing, pole climbing and running up walls. Each one takes place in a different location - in Italy, for some reason or other. Players are guided through the games by a squawking parrot. Will it vomit when you lose, like the proverbially sick one beloved of footballers? Find out on Spectrum, Amstrad and C64/128.

EYEBALL Q-BALL

Set for release on the Amiga in mid-October is English Software's *Q Ball*. It's not pool, it's not snooker and it's not billiards but it *is* a ball game with the same basic concept, but played inside a cube which has no gravity, eight pockets and the ability to be rotated in stunning 3D. So now you can line up your shots in true perspective. With digitised music and real sound effects (ale quaffing noises in the background perhaps?) it promises to be an absorbing game, despite the improbable name of the author, a Mr – wait for it – Billyard. Price for *Q Ball* is fixed at £19.95 inc VAT.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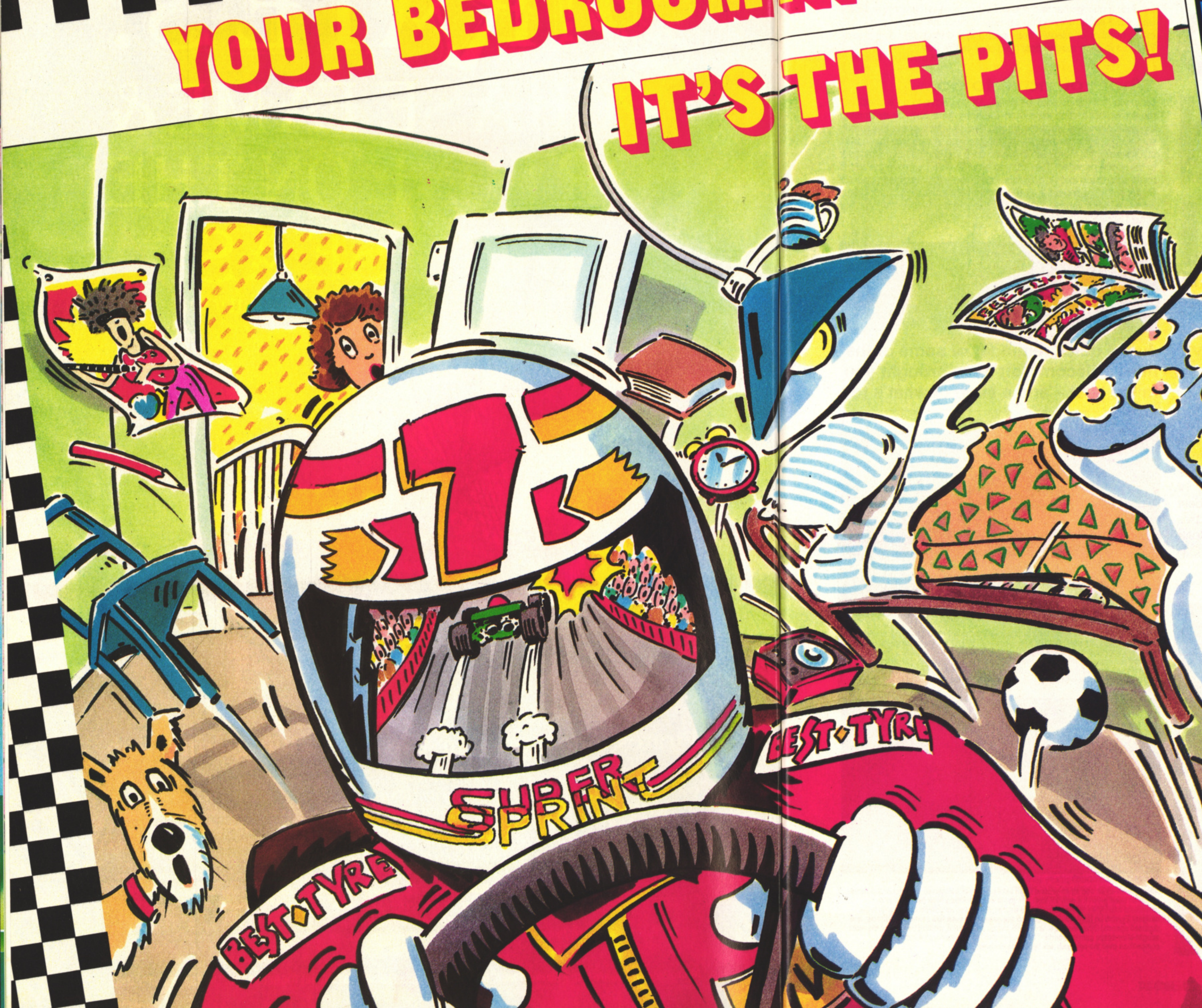
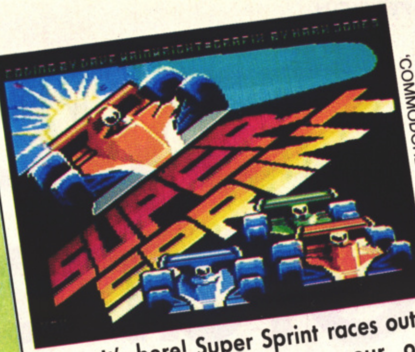
YOUR BEDROOM...

IT'S THE PITS!

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Two Grand Slam!!

£2000 worth of software up for grabs in ACE's stunning Telecom Soft games giveaway...

Ho ho ho, you just can't believe it, can you? Just another **Father Christmas fairy tale**, we hear you cry...OK! Just turn the page! Go ahead and miss out! After all, you'll only be turning down the chance to walk away with a **YEAR's** supply of **FREE** games, games from three of Britain's **best software labels**, a whole string of **red-hot** releases that will simply go **ker-plopp** through your letterbox – without you having to do so much as rise from your keyboard!

The Prizes

ACE has joined up with **Telecom Soft's Rainbird, Firebird, and Firebird Silver** labels to bring **FOUR** of you lucky readers the chance of winning **EVERY** release from **ALL THREE** labels for a **whole year**. Judging by the previous releases from Telecom Soft, that means a whole year of top quality software for your machine, since the company cover a very wide range of formats.

Currently there are twelve releases scheduled from **Rainbird** for 1987/8, with retail prices ranging between £14.95 and £24.95. With games like *Starglider* already on the table, you simply can't go wrong. If you've got an ST that means you could get at least £265 worth of games from Rainbird alone. This part of the prize would be worth a mega-competition on it's own!

Firebird of *Elite* and *Sentinel* fame are expecting to conquer the charts with no less than ten releases in 1987/8. At retail prices between £7.95 and £9.95, that's worth around £85.00 to Commodore and Spectrum owners, and even more tothose with 16-bit machines.

Finally, **Firebird Silver**, who have proved themselves one of the most successful budget companies around with affordable classics like Thrust, Booty, and Zenji. Best of all, they're planning over a hundred releases over the next twelve months at £1.99 and occasional games in their new £2.99 range, and since the lucky winners will be getting them for the price of a stroll to the front door, that'll be worth at least £200 to them.

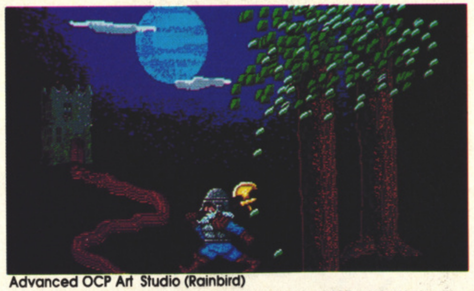
Add it all together and you get a four prizes worth between £450 and £650 each, depending on which machine you own and the exact number of releases from each label during the coming year. You'd have to be mad to pass up a chance like this!

What you have to do...

Let's face it, it just couldn't be easier! All you have to do is check out the screenshot section printed on the entry form and, by examining the shots elsewhere on these pages, decide which game the section comes from. For example, you might think the section was taken from our screenshot of Starglider, in which case you should enter Starglider in the space provided. Then all you have to do is complete the rest of the form, using block capitals, cut it out of your magazine (or photocopy it) and send it off to the address on the form. Entries must reach us by November 14th 1987. The winners will be the first four correct entries pulled out of the hat.

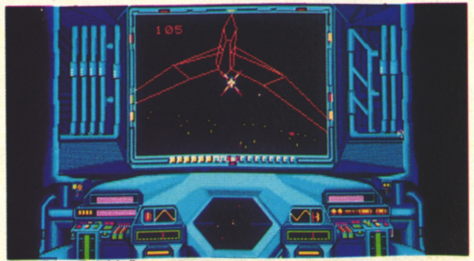
How can you lose with software like this?

Just a quick reminder of some of the titles Telecom Soft have brought you in the past – and a taste of what's to come...



Advanced OCP Art Studio (Rainbird)

Available on almost all formats, we picked out AAS in Issue 1 of ACE as being 'the best bit-mapped Paintbox program'. For Spectrum owners it remains the most powerful and easiest to use piece of graphics software ever written for the machine, and it tops the list for Amstrad and Commodore owners as well. Random sprays, sixteen pens, sixteen user-definable brushes, and you can manipulate your image by cutting, pasting, enlarging, reducing, squashing, stretching, flipping, and rotating. Who knows what they'll come up with this year?



Starglider (Rainbird)

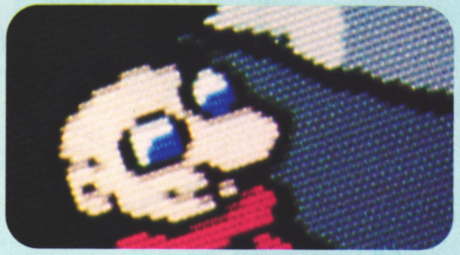
All-action air-to-air and air-to-ground flight simulation that's achieved enormous popularity and even been given it's own TV slot! The game incorporates a high degree of fast movement and flying ability with a subtle degree of strategy as you do battle against the naughty Egrons on jolly old Novenia. The Amiga version even has stereo soundtracks and digitised speech! Other versions have been just as successful, making this one of the most sought-after space games around. You can bet that the software up for grabs in our competition over the next year will be just as exciting.

Entry Form

Your name:

Your address:

Examine the screen shot section below and enter in the space provided the name of the game you think it comes from.



This screenshot section shows part of the screen from:

____

If I am one of the lucky winners, I would like to receive software compatible with the

____________________ ________

(state computer and format required - cass/disk)

Please tick the following boxes where appropriate before posting your entry;

Which of the following magazines do you buy?

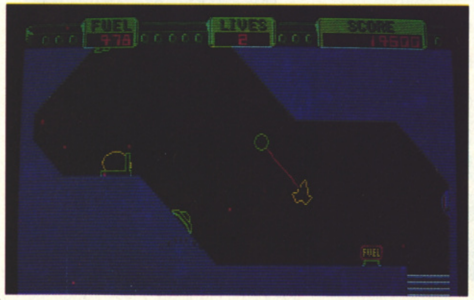
- Commodore User ☐
- Your Commodore ☐
- Your Sinclair ☐
- Sinclair User ☐
- Computer and Video Games ☐
- Your Computer ☐
- ST World ☐
- ST User ☐
- Crash ☐
- Personal Computer World ☐
- Zzap!64 ☐
- The Games Machine ☐
- Computing with Amstrad CPC ☐
- Amstrad Action ☐

Rules:

1. The closing date for entries is November 14th 1987.
2. Employees of Telecom Soft, Future Publishing Ltd, and their families are ineligible for entry.
3. The winners of the competition shall be the first four correct entries drawn at random from amongst those received prior to the Closing Date and no correspondence will be entered into.
4. Winners will be notified by post and their names published in the January issue of A.C.E.

Send this form to:

Telecom Soft Competition, Advanced Computer
Entertainment, 4 Queen Street, BATH, BA1 1EJ

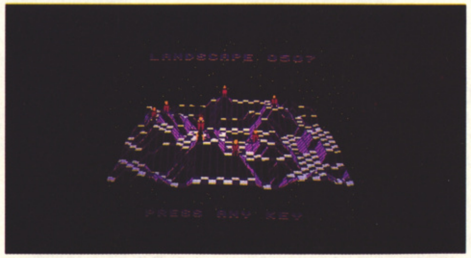


◀Thrust (Firebird Silver)

One of the many Firebird Silver budget games that have proved to us all that cheap doesn't mean nasty. Thrust is a wonderful example of how a simple game can grab you for hours on end as you manoeuvre your spaceship through a series of caverns. Your object is to collect fuel and destroy hostile gun turrets without crashing into the tunnel walls. Tough enough as it is, but you've also got to make a return journey with a heavy load slung under your craft. Very mean and VERY addictive. Look out for more winners like this next year..popping through YOUR letterbox??

Sentinel (Firebird) ▶

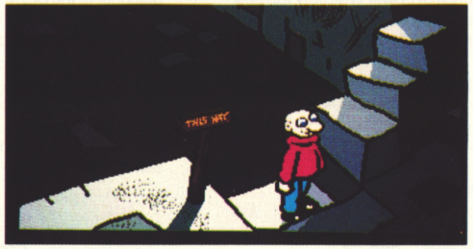
A truly unique game in which you play the part of a Synthoid and must travel through 10000 sensational 3D landscapes in your quest to destroy the Sentinel. Strategy combined with high-pressure puzzling gives you an immensely challenging game for people who like to think on their feet. Received numerous awards for originality and programming expertise.



...and coming soon...

Dick Special: The Search for Spook (Rainbird)

Those with long memories will remember Ant Attack, a game that revolutionised peoples ideas about 3D programming possibilities on 8-bit machines. Dick Special is the latest creation of Sandy White and Angela Sutherland of Ant Attack fame and has been over two years in the making. Rainbird reckon that it's the first ever fully animated cartoon character to be completely controlled by the player with superb detail and high-quality animation. Certainly the preview pic looks pretty interesting – ACE will of course be covering this release as soon as we get our sweaty paws on a copy



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ACE LETTERS

ACE readers sound off about the state of the world and the state of ACE

Who?

Could you please give me someone to write to? I think your new magazine is brilliant. However, I do think that there are changes that you should make.

Firstly, who am I writing to? I think that the person(s) answering letters such as this should have a name or names so that people like me would know how to head letters like this.

Gareth Saper
Neath

Well,you should send letters to Pete Connor. But please try to make them a bit more interesting than this one.

Wow! Triff!

As I walked into my local newsagents to get a paper, I noticed your mag – well, the game really. So I picked up your mag, bought it and went out of the shop reading your mag. Wow! Triff! Mega mixtures of computers mag! So I've got an order at my newsagent for your triff mag! Oh yep, I own a ZX Spectrum + but I's scrapping my pennies together for an ST but I really would like to win one! Anyway Great mag and keep up the good work!

Darren Sparrow.
Eastleigh

Well, we'd all like an ST, wouldn't we? Still, you might get lucky in the competition.

What a relief to get some genuine letters on these pages. They're proof that you do really exist. And a very mixed bunch you are; the oldest authenticated reader is 63, while the youngest is 9. Whatever the age you seem to have liked – on the whole – our first issue. Let us know what you think of the second one; we reckon it's a whole lot better. Get in touch with us on anything you feel strongly about, by writing to ACE Letters, 4 Queen Street, Bath, BA1 1EJ

Standards

I am writing to air my views on the standard of software available. Software companies seem to be going through a phase of converting every arcade coin-op they can lay their hands on. And then they expect us to buy it because on the cover of the game it says' Officially Licensed Conversion'. Why must we put up with pathetically childish games such as *The Astonishing Adventures of Mr Weems And The She Vampires?* Piranha must be desperate for ideas.

Why can't we have some original plots instead of the usual 'dodge the deadly nasties and then blast the hypergalatic pandimensional timewarp and then do it all over again'. If software companies want us to buy their games they must at least try and produce something a bit more interesting.

Andrew Russell
Cwribran, Gwent

The simple answer is that too many people are prepared to put up with 'pathetically childish' games, rather than advanced ccomputer entertainment. We'll be going in to bat for the latter kind.

Sad Amstrad

I must congratulate yourself and the rest of the team at ACE for producing a really 'spoof' mag. I especially enjoyed reading Pete Connor's comments on *Pirates.* However, sadly, I'm an Amstrad owner and was a bit frustrated at the limited offers for Amstrad owners compared to the obviously more favourable freebies offered to owners of Spectrums or Commodores. Please try to improve your service to Amstrad owners.

John Wood
Greenwich

Frustrated? While the cover cassette itself didn't offer Amstrad owners a lot (OK – it offered them nothing) you were given the opportunity to get a pretty stunning £8 off some very good games – which Commodore and Spectrum owners didn't get. And the bargains went on in the Mail Order pages. So I don't really think you were badly done by.

Boulderdashed

I have just purchased your first issue, and will be purchasing many more to come. I recently bought the game *Boulder Dash I*, and find it reasonably easy up to level 1 then find it impossible to do. Have you any tips or pokes?

G. Brunet
Coventry

We've got stacks of tips for that classic game – and, in fact, we were going to print them in this issue. But pressure on space meant we had to leave them out. Help will be at hand in the next issue of ACE.

Cheeky beggar

In your first issue of ACE you made three mistakes. They are:
(1) Page 88 Castle Computers Rode Runner. (Road Runner)
(2) Page 74, game 'Lords of Midnight' missed out price list.
(3) Page 76, game 'The Best of 3D' missed out price for Amstrad.

Do I get a prize for spotting these mistakes?

David Bird
Newport Gwent

No. The minimum number of mistakes you need to spot in order to be eligible for a prize is 473. There were quite a few typographical errors in ACE 1 – but not that many.

Loves it

After reading your first issue of ACE I was thoroughly surprised with the colour reviews and the PIC is a brilliant idea. Your Mail Order software is fantastic. I own a Commodore 64 (4 years old y'know?!!) and love to see the graphics and reviews of the Amiga and Atari ST.

Stephen Middleton
Thornton Heath

Adding ROM

I read somewhere that the Atari ST had 192K ROM but could be expanded to 320K by adding extra ROM packs. If that is correct how are they added? i.e. plugged on back or placed inside the computer. I am seriously thinking about buying an ST.

S Beniston
Notts

Yes, you can expand the ST's ROM. There's a slot at the left side of the computer where you can plug in up to 128K of extra ROM. A widespread use for the extra ROM is a better version of BASIC.

Sound query

Could you please answer my questions;
(1) I have heard that the Atari ST has the same sound chip as the Spectrum. Does this mean the sound is just going to be a bit better than the 64?
(2) I am working and I was in doubt on whether to buy a Sega, Atari ST or Amiga. Is it really worth the long wait for an ST or Amiga?

Keep up the good work chaps.

Greig Stewart
West Sussex

A. Boffin writes: Yes, the ST does have the same sound chip as the Spectrum Plus 2. But sound quality depends not only on the chip used but also on the power of the processor driving it – in this case the speedy ol' 68000. Clever programmers can get some nifty noises out of the ST – much better than you're ever likely to hear on a Spectrum.

ST or Amiga?

Having been a dedicated 8-Bit machine man for some 6 years now

I have decided to move on up to a 16-Bit machine but which one? The Atari St or the Commodore Amiga?

Being a CBM 64 user I am inclined towards the Amiga but before shelling out some £500 I want to know more details.

How about a Bench Test on the two showing all the pros and cons for each machine as well as your views upon which one is likely to be better software backed?

David Harrhy
Bargoed, Glamorgan

It's a tricky problem, and one that needs a lot more space than we can give it here. Which is why we're doing a comparison of the two machines in our next issue.

Missing MSX

I looked at your new magazine on a local book shelf this week, and see that you found it very easy to pretend that MSX has not been invented as yet. Why is it that magazines are so anti-MSX when it is now a fact more people in the UK use MSX than CBM64s and BBCs, yet mags like yours seems to be so nasty about it.

You are losing over 95,000 Msx readers in UK, and over 2 mil in Europe.

You cannot have that amount with Atari/BBC/CBM64's put together. We lost the Msx Computing Mag by Haymarket Publications, not because of lack of readers but to lack of Ads.

I then look forward with many others to buying ACE when you start printing about MSX.

D. Webb
Spalding

I understand your distress – and in future we'll be trying to make more mention of the MSX machines. At the very least we'll be including them in the Release Box that every review contains. The problem though is that software just isn't developed on MSX these days; when a game is new it appears somewhere else. Finally, I think you've exaggerated just a teensy-weensy bit the importance of MSX relative to other computers.

Nipper wins Crown

I am only 9 years old and I have completed *Defender of the Crown* and you have my dad's signature on the dotted line to prove it. So what do you think of that!

Nicholas Burne
Isleworth

I think it's pretty impressive.

128 games

I have recently saved enough money from a summer job to buy a new Commodore 128 and 1571 disk drive. Please could you tell me of software specifically designed for it as the main software houses treat it as a 'ghost'.

R. Johal
Hayes Middx

Well, we've racked our puny brains and we can't come up with any titles written specifically for the 128. The point is that there many more 64s than 128s, so software houses naturally write for the larger user base and then ensure that software runs on the higher spec machine – generally, in 64 mode.

PIC perfect

Well done on your fist issue. I'm glad that you haven't reverted to making you magazine look like a comic with colours everywhere. The colour pictures are great, the news section is great and the new review system is excellent. I hate the other reviews such as 5 stars , or 10 out of 10. Your reviews give tons of information and the PIC is really clever.

Patrick Walsh
Slough

Pre-pubescent

I simply wished to congratulate you on the quality of the excellent first issue of ACE.

The magazine has begun at a fairly high standard and will, hopefully stay there. Too many of today's publications cater to 'schoolboy humour ' so it was pleasantly surprising to see that there was no silly address to write to on the Atari Competition, neither was there a glut of 'def', 'smash', 'wow', or other such expressions edited by pre-pubescent schoolgirls! Keep up the good work.

Steve Caple
Crewe

There was heated debate on the subject of schoolgirls when we began ACE, but this is not the place to go in to it.

Is he crawling?

The more good computer games magazines there are, the better it is for the dedicated games place. ACE certainly ranks highly amongst my favourite magazines. No, I'm not crawling, I do mean it. Wouldn't it have been easy to jump onto the magwagon and rate games in the way we all know and love?. Instead ACE came up with a totally novel approach, including a graph that told you roughly how your level of interest would fluctuate over one year. You must admit that is pretty useful, especially if you're in a similar situation to mine and have to spend your pennies wisely.

Rahul Joshi
London

Are you sure you're not crawling?

!?!!?%!

Excellent, excellent, excellent! Oh Boy! At long last, can I believe my eyes! Am I dreaming!?! Have I actually just found and read an almost 16-Bit based, NON-COMPUTER DISCRIMINATORY entertainment-based magazine? A magazine without pages of "pecks" and "Prods" or whatever they're called? A magazine full of down-to-earth and incredibly colourful games reviews, graphic, adventure and music sections written in everday average punter in the street speak?

I wanted to rush out, buy and play most items covered in the reviews. Shame I haven't got a computer! Then again, I could have a go at the easy to enter competition. None of that "finish the following sentence" claptrap. (I hope this letter doesn't exclude me from winning).

All this is too much for me.... I'll have to go and lie down in a darkened room until October 1st, slobber, slobber.

Yours suffering from high blood pressure.

Mike Casartelli
Derby

Same stable

Having just bought ACE I figured I should write and congratulate you on a brilliant first issue.

When I sold my Amstrad the one thing I missed was Amstrad Action. The impression I got is that ACE is from the same stable. If not it is very similar with its light hearted approach and whatever the case I like your style. I buy a wide vartiety of mags, some specialist ST mags and some general computer mags. From what I've read your mag seems set to compete with CVG and it doesn't take a lot of intelligence to figure that you will win. ACE is light hearted and simple yet it doesn't become a mag for 3 year olds. Obviously your mag has still to develop, but I'm sure it will be a success.

By the way I've two grumbles. One your fault, one not. Firstly I object to paying 50p a ticket booking fee for PCW show tickets (perhaps the ed could blow up the ticket agency – only kidding). Secondly, I think game scores out of 1000 is a bit OTT (I get confused). Finally, your spoof letters page was brilliant.

M. Knight
Harrow

Impressed

I was most impressed with the magazine – particularly the new style reviews. It is a good idea to include the Predicted Interest Curve since when buying a game it is often difficult to predict how long into the future you will be playing it. The 'IQ FACTOR' is also a good idea as even a dedicated 'Zapper' likes to have something to think about in a game.

One problem with the review system is the 'ACE rating' which I find a little confusing due to it being out of 1000. Wouldn't a mark out of 10 be sufficient?

I think the idea of giving away free games is good. However, it could be better to give away playable levels of new releases since this would be better for the public in that they would be able to actually spend time playing part of a game instead of simply buying it outright – which is often a risk these days at £10 a time.

Andrew Gaunt
Walsall

A mark out of 10 wouldn't really do, since the ACE Rating is directly related to the area under the PIC; we need the 1000 to show up the variations. Your suggestion about the cassettes is a good idea – so good that we'ere doing it on this very issue, with the five playable Bubble Bobble *screens.*

Fab

May I say thanks for such a fab magazine. When I saw it I bought it straight off and when I saw it was by the ex-PCG team I was thrilled – it's just how PCG used to be, except better!

Whilst you were gone I have started my own computer fanzine for Commodore, Spectrum and Amstrad Called *Computer Lynx*. It costs 30p` and issue 5 is available now! This issue contains a fab Mastertronic Competition and news, reviews, hints, tips, pokes, reviews, exclusive new games in depth etc.

Anyway, all the best for the future of ACE, I sure hope it lasts a long time!

Anyone ordering Computer lynx please enclose a SAE plus cheque/PO for 30p or cheque/PO for 49p with no SAE, payable to Jonathan Morris.

Jonathan Morris
187 Perrysfield Road,
Cheshunt
Herts EN8 0TL

We shouldn't really be publicizing rival mags, but since you've been so nice about us...But why you should want to name your mag after a long-defunct computer beats me.

Never before published

I have been writing to *Popular Computing Weekly* (especially Ken Garroch) for years. Never once have I had a reply or a letter published (perhaps they write their own as well!)

Nick Marshall
Newbury

Will this do?

The shape of things to come

It kind of hit me between the eyes while I was browsing thru' the usual computer mags, *C&VG*, *Crash*, *Sinclair User*, *Your Sinclair*, that kind of stuff.

Is this the shape of things to come, I asked myself? Do you at ACE intend on handing out freebies all the time?? Will ACE fade away after a few months into the darkest recessess of obscure oblivion? (I hope not).

I found the Graphics Sc[illegible] article really interesting, as I'[illegible] considering the purchase of a 520 ST. I was wondering if there was any games creation software for the ST in the pipeline, as I'm well into arcade quality animation & action. I was wondering if there was the slightest chance of something like PAW being adapted to suit the ST range as I'm well into adventures and Tolkien, rescuing fair maidens, hobbites, orcs, white haired wizards, eg. Gandalf, putting an end to totally evil madmen such as Sauron releaving dragons of their hoarded fortunes and the odd tone deaf dwarf.

Oh well, must get gack to finding a way out of this dungeon. Good Luck to you at ACE with further issues, boldly going where no other magazine has bothered going before...

The Jester
Ashford

ACE *will not fade away into oblivion. Unfortunately, we don't know of any game creation software or of any plans to produce the adventure creators for the ST.*

Rubber devil' fan

I thank you for your freebie game with issue 1 of ACE, but I feel that your format is another clone of the other mags about – nothing's changed; games games and nothing but games: I know you HAVE to cover games to sell the mag, but could you try to include a listing or two for the people who LOVE typing them in, ESPECIALLY SPECTRUM (fanfare of trumpets) the rubber devil!

A helpline on ADVENTURES, especially the older ones, with tips, hints and helpful advice, would be a godsend to the imbecilic among us who cannot solve them! Please don't forget the 8 bit machines. There are millions of us out here with no job so we can't buy a new 16 bit job. Sorry about this!

It is hard to believe, but there are still 'beginners' who have no inkling as to what goes on inside their machines, and it's only too easy to be tempted to play games instead of learning to program no matter how simple the program may be. How many mindless morons simply zap anything on the screen without caring a toss about who wrote it, or what effort was made to attain the knowledge to write games in machine code. Lecture over now! I do hope that the FREE game tape will be a regualr thing in the future since you are charging £1.50 for the rag-sorry MAG! Or maybe you could charge a quid like everybody else and forgo the freebie.

Whatever the situation, I for one will be eagerly searching the paper shops for the next issue.

John Hammond
Heywood, Lancs

After all those nasty things you've said about us I'm surprised that I'm even bothering to type a civilized reply. But that's the kind of nice guy that I am. We most certainly will **not** *be carrying type-in listings – not even for that rubber devil of yours. Listings are, frankly, a bore; and only a tiny minority of people get anything out of them. ACE is for entertainment, not punishment.*

The Pilgrim carries loads of hints and tips for adventurers – and a helpline service may well be on the way.

Drab and boring

Your mag is more organised than, say , Computer and Video Games, but to really pull computer freaks away from their own machine magazines your going to have to:

1. Change the cover. It's drab and boring. Have a new cover each week (sorry month). The present cover is hardly eye-catching. Perhaps use a picture of the latest hit game. Anything as long as the word 'ACE' is in 3D and the colour equals that of a rastafarian's hat! (love the texture of the back cover...Keep it).
2. Contents. You must put a lot more colour inside too, otherwise people will just read the sections that greatly interest them. If another magazine reviews are better than yours Arcade freaks may switch mags. Obvious really, but you can prevent it. Colour really will make people stop and look. I would say reviews are read most, so try incorporating some amusing remarks like "What wuz dat ED?" Many Computer mags are doing this so try it! Divide games into different categories (Strategy, Simulation, Arcade and Adventure). You shouldn't have based your Adventure section on the Atari ST and the Commodore Amiga because only a minority of readers will have these micro's. The rating system is the best I've ever seen. Neat idea. Keep pumping in Compos every month. (like the ST comp). It would also be a good idea if you brought in a new feature every month or every two months.

R.R. Moranzani
Devon

Comments like 'Wut wuz dat ED?' are amusing ? Who are you trying to kid?

Competition cuts

My son was thrilled with your excellent new magazine and has read it from cover to cover. The only regret was in finding that to enter for your competition he had to cut part of an article he wanted to keep. Would it be possible to place competition entries on the reverse side of advertisements rather than articles?

Mrs J.G. Brittan
Bristol

Lots of letters and Reader Surveys have complained about the positioning of the competition entry form. We're sorry. It won't happen again, we hope. If entering a competition should mean cutting pages you want to keep, then feel free to send a photocopy instead.

Awesome

Just a short letter to say how much I enjoyed your the first issue of this great magazine. The new-style games rating system works really well. It shows at a glance how good or bad a game is, so is much better than percentages. The Predicted Interest Curve is the best idea in games reviewing yet. Also the section on MIDI is fabulous as I, and many others, are interested in music using computers. The subscription offer is awesome and I will be subscribing immediately.

Andrew Bisp
Birmingham

Preferences please!

To help us provide the kind of magazine you want to read, please give a rating to each section of ACE , on a scale of 1(liked least) to 10 (liked most). When you write to ACE Letters, please enclose the coupon – or a photocopy of it.

NEWS

ADVENTURES

COMPETITION

TRICKS 'N' TACTICS

LETTERS

SPECIAL OFFERS

STICK SENSE

BLITTER END

3D GAMES

MUSIC

QUESTIONNAIRE

ARCADES

SCREEN TEST

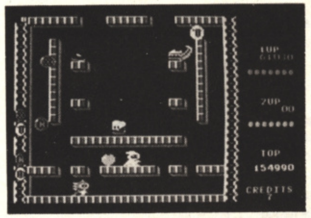
BUDGET GAMES

Bubble Bobble

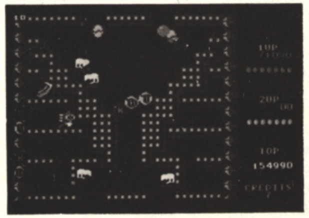
How to load and play your FREE demo copy

Check out your free cover cassette featuring Firebird's amazing *Bubble Bobble* - and see why it got an ACE rating of a massive 958 last month!

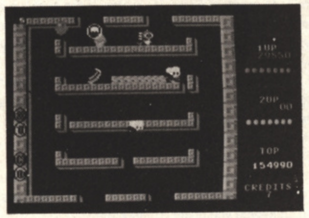
You control Bub, a cute little dinosaur who leaps from platform to platform fighting 'bullies' - the bad guys who fall onto the start of each screen and attack. Push left or right on your joystick to move to either side, push up to jump and press fire to blow a bubble.



Bubbles are the key to handling those nasty bullies: blow a bubble at a bully and he floats off trapped inside. If you now jump up and burst the bubble, that trapped bully flies off across the screen and turns into a piece of fruit for Bub to collect. You'll have to be quick about it, because the bully will break out of the bubble after a while and he'll be very angry indeed!

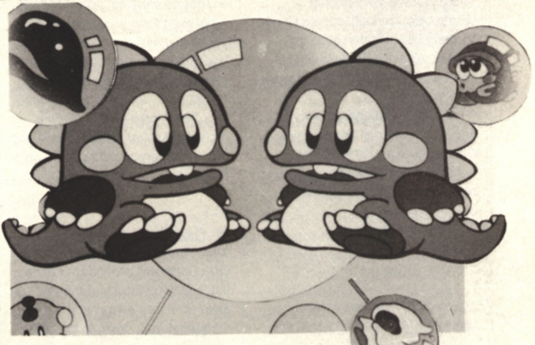


You'll find you get plenty of bonuses and all manner of strange side-effects from picking up the various types of food and other strange objects around the screen. You can also step your score up by bursting several bullies' bubbles at once, turning them into exotic items worth lots of points.



An even better way of running up the points is to use the various special bubbles against the bullies. These float down from the top of the screen on higher levels, and when burst can unleash all sorts of powerful forces. The only ones you'll encounter on the demo screens are water bubbles - burst these to wash the bullies clean away, and then make lots of points picking up the jewels they turn into - but the full game has a whole arsenal of other bubble-weapons.

Time is of the essence - bonuses disappear if left too long, trapped bullies escape after a while, and the whole game can get decidedly nasty if you spend too long on any one screen. If you use the combo option Bub's got player two's dinosaur Bob to give him a hand, so that overall time limit's much less of a problem. He's also got some hungry competition for all that nice fruit though, so it's a bit of a mixed blessing!



Load and Run!

SIDE A: COMMODORE 64

Loading

C64: Rewind tape, hold down SHIFT and press the RUN/STOP key.

C128: Switch to C64 mode, and then load as above.

Controls

Uses one or two joysticks: for single player, use a joystick in port 2. Player two can join in at any time on the C64 version just by pressing the joystick 1 fire button.

The Screens

C64 users get five screens selected from the first 20.

SIDE B: SPECTRUM

Loading

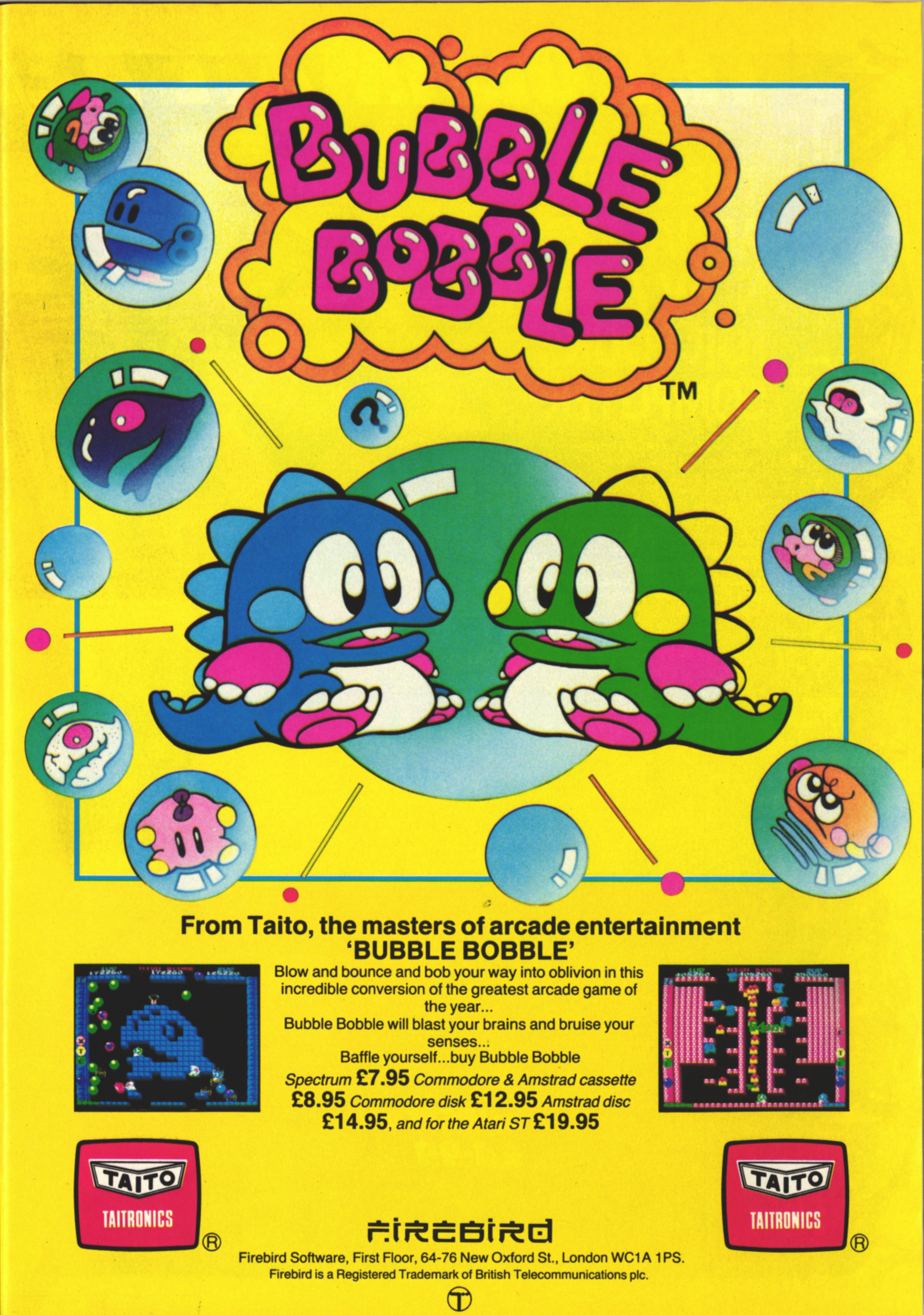
48k Spectrum: to load type LOAD"", hit the ENTER key and press PLAY on the tape deck. 128K Spectrums: select 'tape loader', hit the ENTER key and press PLAY on the tape deck.

Controls

Once the demo has loaded you can select the normal types of joystick or define keys for each player. This is a one-off selection, so make sure you get it right first time!

The Screens

Spectrum users get the first five screens of the game.



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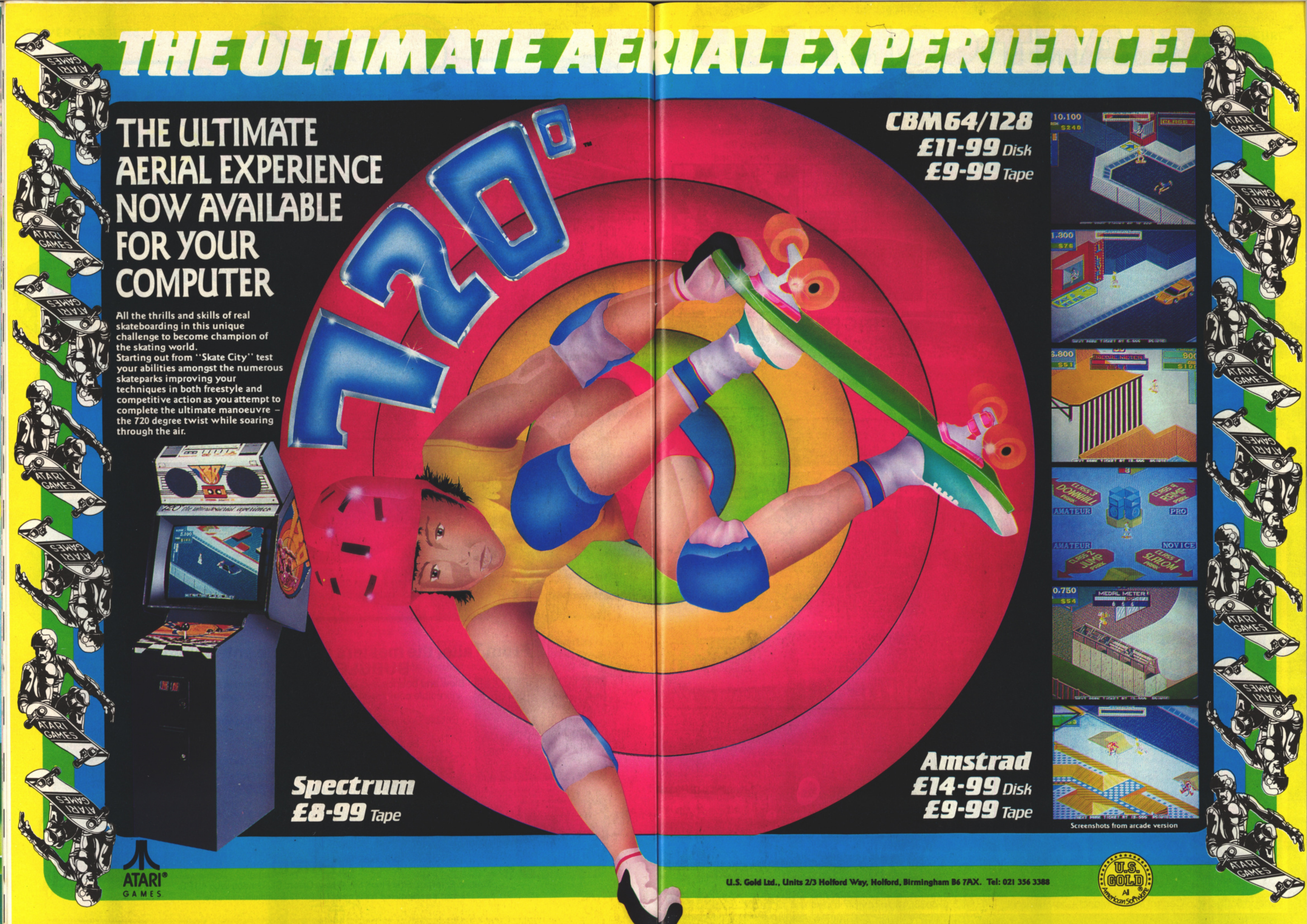

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Screenshots from arcade version

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STICK SENSE

The days are long gone when you could do without a joystick. Now it's more a question of having a stick for your shoot 'em ups, another for games requiring 90 degree turns and, possibly, another one for stirring your tea. But how do you make your decision? How do you choose the right stick for the right job out of the millions that pour in and out of the world's injection mouldings every year? Fear not - we're naming the best sticks for the games you play, and giving you the lowdown on all that confusing joystick jargon.

SHOOT 'EM UP STICKS

For all-action games where you're constantly dodging and shooting you need a stick that fulfils several criteria.

It's got to be **robust** – it's no holds barred in this kind of game.

It's got to be **responsive** – can you move easily out of the way of those pesky aliens, in all directions?

It's got to have a **decent grippable shaf**t – you're going to be doing a lot of wrenching on this thing, so you don't want some twiddly little thing the size of a toothpick.

It helps if it has **auto-fire –** that old trigger finger can get very tired indeed.

It's nice, for the same reasons, to have a **choice of fire buttons** – for thumb or fingers.

It's a boon if you can **position it on a surface** – alien-zapping's easier when your stick stays in one place.

Strangely enough, not all that many sticks fit the bill; too many lack vital elements, particularly a decent shaft and the necessary responsiveness.

First Choice

Suncom TAC 5

£13.99

This is the top-of-the-range TAC (Tactile Audible Controller) joystick; it really does the business on arcade shoot-em-ups. The microswitches give excellent 8-way movement – it's particularly good on diagonals. The base has four rubber pads which give a reasonable hold on flat surfaces; they're not suckers but they'll keep in you in one place. There's a fire button on the top of the shaft, with two more on the base - giving you plenty of choices when the blasting takes its toll on your digits. While the TAC 5 is not the most solid joystick we've ever seen – it's pretty light – it's so responsive that once you're used to it you won't find yourself giving it as much hammer as other sticks require. All that's lacking is an auto-fire button.

Honourable mentions

Competition Pro Extra

£16.49

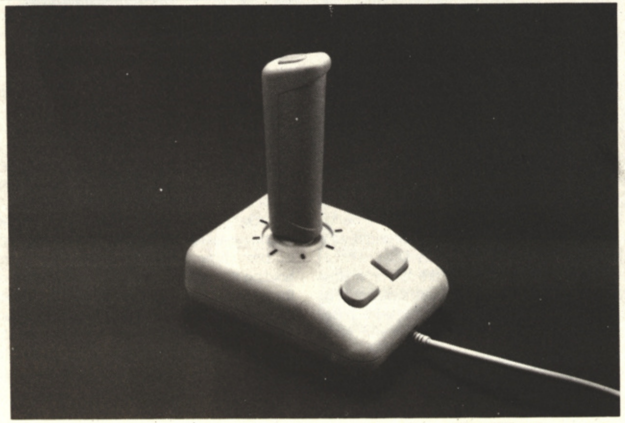
The Pro comes in two versions, one of them with a snazzy clear plastic base. It;'s got a good positive feel and is pretty responsive. Only problem with this stick is the lack of a shaft fire button.

Quickshot 2 Turbo

£14.95

Needs a bit more welly than the other two joysticks in this section. Very stylish red and black design, fire buttons everywhere you need them, auto-fire, and suckers on the base to give you a good steady platform. The shaft needs a pretty grown-up hand to make the most of it.

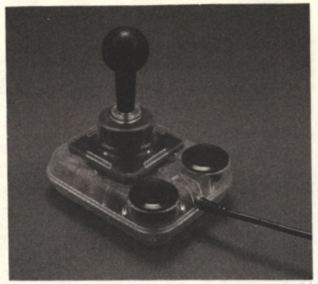
Suncom TAC 5 - lots of positive tactile and audio feedback



Quickshot 2 Turbo – you can't see on this pic, but the red and black makes it very snazzy indeed

PIXEL PERFEC STICKS

You know the kind of thing; one false pixel and you're a gonner, as in *Head Over Heels* or *Spindizzy*. These games need a stick that gives you that kind of minute control. Robustness isn't so much of a problem, and neither is the postion of the fire buttons.



Competition Pro Extra – the latest in see-through WYSIWYG stick technology

First Choice

Konix Speedking
£12.99

This original stick has sold real well since its arrival. It's something of a gimmicky design, and doesn't perform well on all kinds of games – but for precision movement it's the tops.

Honourable mentions

Competition Pro 5000

This good all-round stick performs pretty neatly under precision testing conditions.

90 DEGREES

Some games – *Boulderdash* and *Skulldiggery* immediately spring to mind – require very swift changes of direction from the horizontal to the vertical. When you're racing down the screen with a boulder or a skull close behind, you have to have the confidence that your stick will get you left, right, up or down very quickly indeed. Many sticks that are good in other respects just won't do this for you; our shoot-em-up choice, the TAC 5, performed miserably on *Skuldiggery* because the shaft needs too much movement to get the required effect.

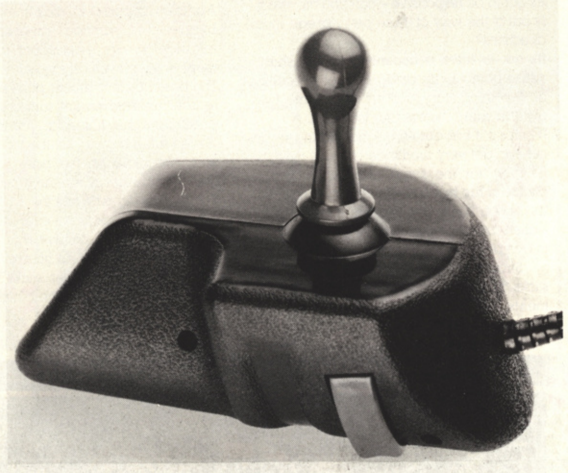
First Choice

Konix Speedking

The Konix wins out again – it is a very quick stick, as well as being a very precise one.

Honourable Mention

Again, the **Competition Pro** earns high marks; it's not quite as slick as the Speedking, but it outperformed everything else.



Konix Speedking - a snug fit and very, very precise

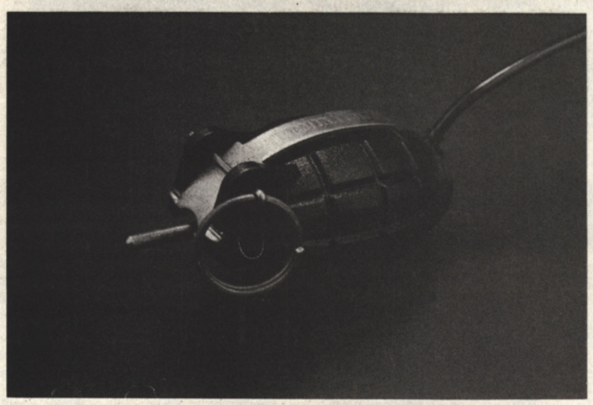
NON-STICK TECHNOLOGY

In the Museum of Stick Archaeology you'll find an awful lot of bizarre game controllers that never quite caught on – usually for the simple reason that they didn't work very well. There's a strange lure about an exotic stick that attracts gamesplayers and wins enormous publicity, even when common sense says it's a turkey.

Mercury Switching

In a mercury switch, the circuit is made by a tiny amount of liquid mercury flowing around inside. Depending on the angle you hold the switch at, the mercury flows so as to bridge the gap between the two contacts (on) or not (off). Put four of these switches in a joystick handle and you won't need a base for it at all – you'll get left, right or whatever simply depending on which way the handle's tipped.

Mercury sticks did have a few months in the limelight, largely because of the money spent advertising them, but the novelty of a joystick with no base couldn't disguise the enormous underlying problem: if a stick's got no base, how do you know whether you're holding it upright or not? Most well-known of these gizmos were *Le Stick*, a knobbly rubber thing of French origin, and the aptly named *Trickstick*, a cylinder you were meant to gently tilt in the direction you wished to move. Neither of these wacky sticks set the world on fire.



A recent curiosity is this grenade joystick, unpleasantly named *The Terminator*. You don't bite the pin – merely waggle the stick and press the steel strip to fire. Strangely for such a gimmick it performs reasonably well. It weighs in at an explosive £19.95

Biophysics

The human body's electrical capacitance might not sound like a great basis for a game controller, but that didn't stop an ugly rash of touch-sensitive devices cropping up. These varied from a conventional stick with a capacitance-operated fire button – the merest brush of a fingertip unleashes a withering hail of fire – to a totally touch-operated controller. Running your finger over a smooth panel to generate the different directions may sound interesting, but in practice the lack of 'feel' sent such devices the same way as mercury sticks.

Thought Control

Even odder than biophysics were the biofeedback devices which, we were assured all those years ago, would soon have the games-playing public attaching electrodes to their fingers and temples. The electrodes were supposed to pick up changes in the body's electrical characteristics and turn them into joystick impulses. These changes are normally quite unconscious but, the theory ran, after a while you'd learn how to make your sprite (or whatever) do what you want, effectively giving you thought control over your games. In practice it didn't work at all for most people, and never really got off the ground.

Analogue Control

Not a turkey at all, this one, but a wonderful idea that sadly lost the fight for industry support. The Atari joystick standard we all take for granted today is based on switches that are either on or off. There's no middle way between centre and up or centre and left: either a direction is selected or it isn't.

Analogue joysticks are based not on switches but on variable resistors (also known as potentiometers or 'pots'). They don't just tell the computer which way you've moved the stick: they also tell it how big the movement was. This makes them ideal for flight simulators, and opens up a lot of control possibilities for other games. But with a very few exceptions – Acorn, for example, and the now defunct Dragon – home computer manufacturers have opted for the Atari standard instead.

Ironically enough, Atari themselves offered two other types of analogue controller – paddles and trackballs – with their 8-bit micros, but these weren't too well supported by software houses and aren't available for the ST. The closest thing to analogue games control nowadays is the mouse – and that's another story altogether.

Infra-red

How about a joystick you don't have to plug into your micro? No more tangled cables – that's the promise of an infra-red joystick. You just play your game by remote control, like you'd change channels on a TV. Unfortunately, as with a TV control box, you have to keep the stick pointed at the receiver all the time or the infra-red control beam won't be picked up. You're bound to forget this at crucial moments and lose control of the game, making the whole exercise rather pointless.

Strain Sticks

Here's one you won't find outside the hallowed circles of CAD (Compuer Aided Design). Though the stick looks quite normal at a glance, it is in fact completely solid: the stick and base form a rigid piece of metal, with no hinges or pivots of any kind. The handle doesn't actually move visibly when you push it, but tiny strain gauges detect the pressure and relay it to the computer. Great stuff for techno-snobs of course, but this kind of technology's a bit pricey for games use at the moment!

STICK SWITCHES

The switches in a joystick make a big difference to the way it feels and performs. There are four main types of switch commonly used in modern sticks:

Blister Switch

One contact is a small metal stud and the other is a shallow, flexible dome arched over it. When the stick or button presses down on the switch, the metal dome pops in and makes contact with the stud. Release the pressure again and the dome pops back out, breaking the contact. A very primitive kind of switch found in older sticks like the *Quickshot II*, the blister has an ugly feel to it and is rather unresponsive. Still used sometimes for fire buttons.

Leaf Switch

Again, one contact is a small metal stud. The other one's a strip of metal clamped at one end. The stick bears against the free end of this strip and bends it to make contact with the stud. Leaf switches are very robust and have a smooth action, but don't give the postive click to them that players tend to expect nowadays.

Direct Contact

The stick is pivoted where it enters the base, and at its lower end has a metal contact. Swing the stick to the right, the metal contact on the other end swings left and bears against a metal plate, one of four surrounding the contact. This completes the circuit directly, with no need for switches: in a sense, the whole stick is one big switch. The principle has a few drawbacks – in particular the completely dead action to it – but sticks based on it make contact reliably and are great for hitting those diagonals.

Microswitch

The magic word in joystick ads today, and with some reason. A microswitch is a small plastic box with a tiny, robust switch sealed inside it. You can't get at the switch contacts themselves: instead there's a small plastic stud projecting from one end of the unit. Press the stud in to make contact, and release it to break the circuit again.

Microswitches are responsive, reliable, they've got a good positive action and are a must for most games. Drawbacks? Well, diagonals can be very difficult to hit with a microswitch stick. The most reliable method for getting, say, top left is to push the stick up and then slide it left so as to make contact on both switches.

SYSTEMS ARCHITECTS

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SOLID STUFF

The rise of 16-bit micros is causing a revolution in games graphics, and solid 3D programs are in the forefront of it. Andy 'I'm no boffin – pass me that slide-rule' Wilton explains how the extra power of an ST, an Amiga or even a boring old PC clone can be used to fill in shapes which 8-bit machines would have to leave as 'wire frames'.

8-bit versions of *Elite* , that wire frame granddaddy of them all, vary in speed and use of colour, but for the most part you could easily mistake any one format for any other. On the new PC version due out soon from Firebird however, you can choose between wire frame and filled-in graphics. Choose 'filled-in', even on a humble Amstrad PC, and the familiar ships, asteroids and space stations move as smoothly as you could wish for - but they're solid.

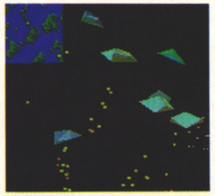
PC *Elite* is the first 16-bit venture for Leeds programming house Real Time, a firm that specialises in 3D graphics. It was Real Time's 3D *Starstrike II* that started the filled-graphics ball rolling some two years ago on the Spectrum and later the Amstrad. Neither of these machines really had enough power for all that area filling, and the results - though very impressive to look at - were only just fast enough for the game to be playable.

Both *Starstrike II* and the later *Starfox* were impressive enough to show that solid 3D was worth pursuing, if only some way could be found round the problem of speed. Firebird's *Sentinel* offered one answer - a game format where movement is kept to a minimum - but increasingly software houses are turning to the extra power of the ST and Amiga as the way forward: Gremlin's *3D Galax* (reviewed this issue) is 16-bit only, as is the forthcoming *Backlash*, a game from *Mercenary* publishers Novagen.

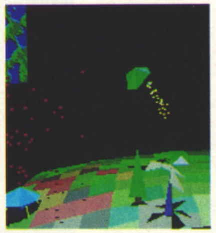
There's also a lot of activity on the (as yet) obscure 32-bit Acorn Archimedes, with Superior about to launch the new shoot-em-up *Zarch*. The game's amazing graphics are already causing quite a stir, but that's nothing new for author David Braben - he was one of the programmers responsible for the original BBC *Elite*. Expect another solid 3D game from Superior later on this year, this time based on tank warfare. There's no title for it yet, but it's said to be impressive stuff.

Owners of less exalted machines will just have to drool over the speed and smoothness of *Zarch's* graphics for the time being, but ST and Amiga versions are already under development at Argonaut - the programming team headed by Jez San, author of Rainbird's wire frame classic *Starglider*. Argonaut are also working on a filled *Starglider* sequel due out early next year, though the betting is that it won't be called *Starglider II*.

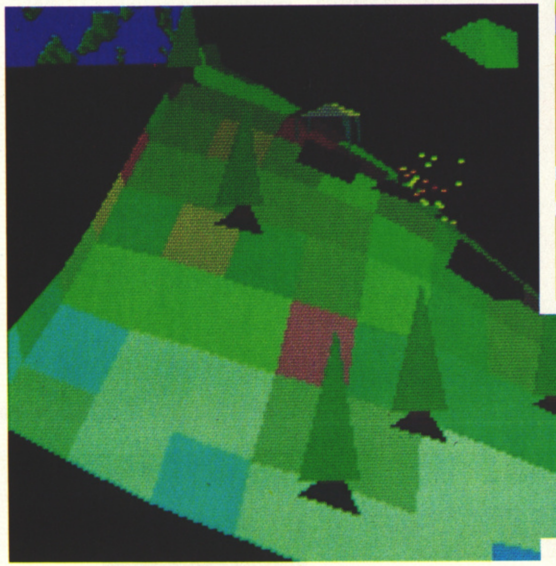
All of this is in sharp contrast to Incentive's new solid 3D Freescape system, which is firmly aimed at the 8-bit



Zarch (Archimedes): High altitude combat, with the ground nowhere in sight - it's just you, the bad guys and a whole load of vapour trails.



Zarch (Archimedes): You're the green craft in the middle of the screen, nose down and thrusting hard. That landscape rushes by underneath you as you open the throttle up.



Zarch (Archimedes) from Superior: You're under fire from a bad guy, but his shot's wide. The real problem here is just staying in control of your craft!

machines. The emphasis in Freescape games - such as the forthcoming *Driller* - will be on exploration and puzzling rather than shooting everything in sight. The graphics shown here are from demo programs, and it's still not clear just how fast the finished games will run.

Wire Frame and Solid 3D

3D home computer games like *Starglider* or *Mercenary* can trace their origins back to a tank warfare game called *Battlezone*. This influential coin-op used a vector display to create its bright, sharp straight-line graphics.

Vector displays are specifically designed to produce straight-lines, and are normally found only as part of purpose-built graphics systems. On your normal TV set, the image is produced by a small beam of light that scans the screen line by line, starting at the top left hand corner of the display and working down, traversing the entire screen fifty times a second. With a vector display, however, the beam is free to sweep in any direction so if the program wants to create a line between any two points, the beam will do precisely that. There was a time when you could pick up a small vector display arcade machine called the Vectrex for around £50.00 – a bargain despite the lack of software for the machine.

Home computers on the other hand normally use the 'raster' displays of TVs or monitors. These displays are made up of pixels - tiny dots of colour - so the lines tend to be rather jagged affairs. That didn't, however, stop programmers imitating *Battlezone's* graphics on home micros. Almost all true-perspective 3D games since then have used straight line graphics, despite the poor use they make of the raster display's real strong point - solid areas of colour. Quite simply, it's much quicker to draw the outlines of shapes than it is to fill them in.

Even with the rise of the ST and Amiga, we're unlikely to see 'vector' graphics disappear overnight. For one thing, large companies usually like to release games across several different machines simultaneously. Real Time's latest project, *Carrier Command*, will almost certainly not be converted to the C64 - the ageing Commodore simply doesn't have the power it would need.

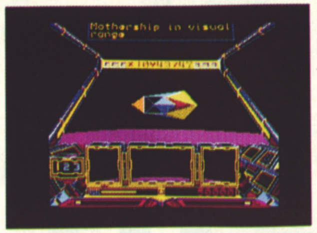
There are also arguments in favour of straight line graphics even on machines which are powerful enough for solid 3D. The time saved by sticking with wire frame techniques could be used to give vehicles and scenery more detail - a trade-off that might prove popular once the initial demand for filled graphics is satisfied.

Archimedes who?

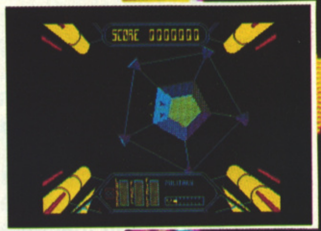
If you've got a spare £800 knocking around, you could buy a machine with no joystick port and only one commercially available game. Put that way, the Acorn Archimedes doesn't sound an attractive proposition for computer entertainment - so why are top programmers like David Braben and Jez San putting so much effort into writing games for it?

The answer is power. The 32-bit ARM chip at the heart of the Archimedes offers undreamt-of power to move sprites, fill areas, draw lines or do any of the other heavy duty tasks a games machine has to handle - very, very quickly. It's faster than the Amiga's blitter chip even at tasks the blitter was specially designed for, and it leaves the ST's speedy 68000 for dead.

If Acorn are planning a cheap ARM-based home machine they're keeping it a closely guarded secret, but don't worry - with ST and Amiga conversions of *Zarch* already under way, we can expect plenty of nice spin-offs from all that Archimedes effort! ●



Starfox (Amstrad) from Ariolasoft: Spectrum and Amstrad versions, written by Real Time, were solid 3D - the C64 conversion wasn't.



Starstrike II (Amstrad) from Firebird: Real Time's first solid 3D game, and in its CPC version arguably still their best.

Solid power

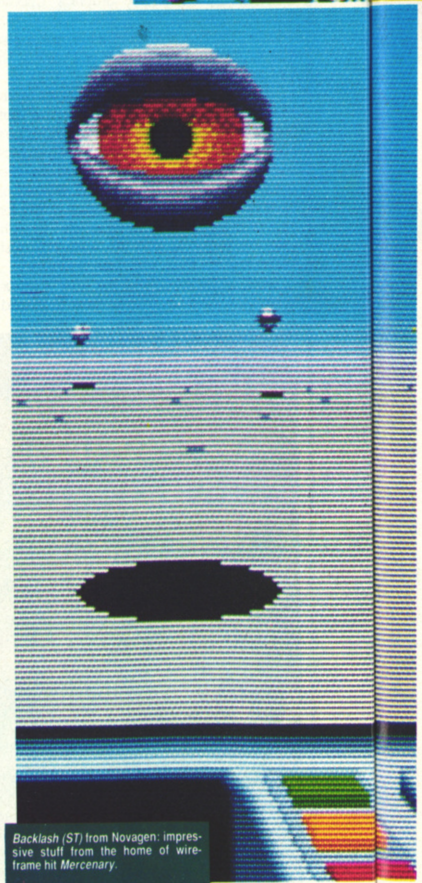
C64: The poor old C64 is terribly underpowered compared to the other main home micros. On most games its wonderful scrolling and sprite capabilities more than make up for this, but they're no help for solid 3D. Even vectors are quite slow on the C64, so it's likely to end up rather left out of things.

Atari ST: With 16-colour screens and bags of power to animate them, the ST can manage far better solid 3D than any of the 8-bit machines. Take a look at the *3D Galax* review in our Screen Test pages for a taste of the goodies to come.

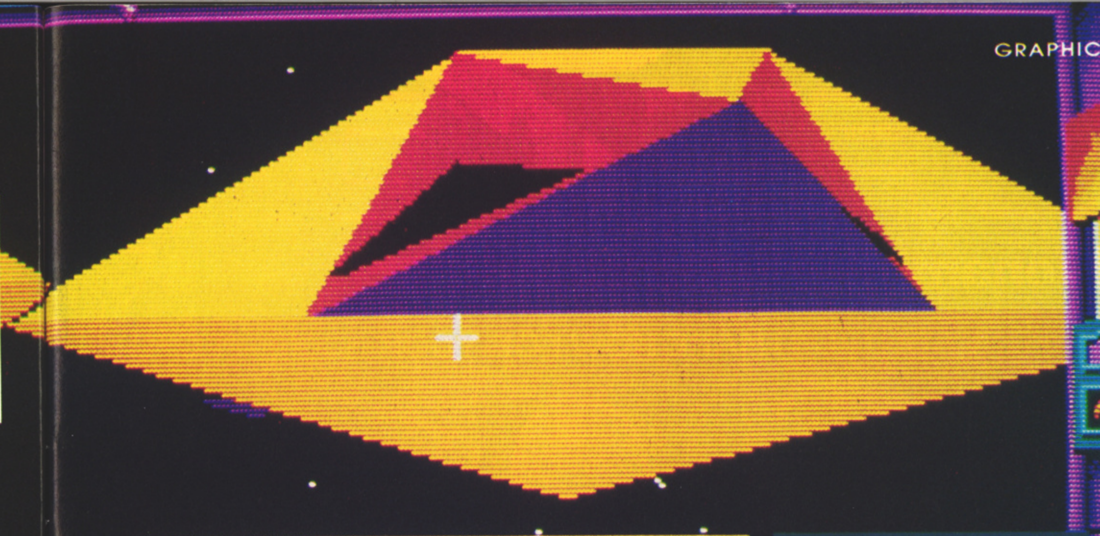
Spectrum: Colour limitations make Spectrum solid 3D mostly a matter of shading patterns, but there's enough power to animate these quite nicely.

Amstrad: The CPC's colour capabilities make for some terrific screens, but there's a lot more work for the program to do to animate them. Probably the best-looking of all the 8-bit machines as far as solid 3D goes, but the Spectrum has the edge on speed and smoothness.

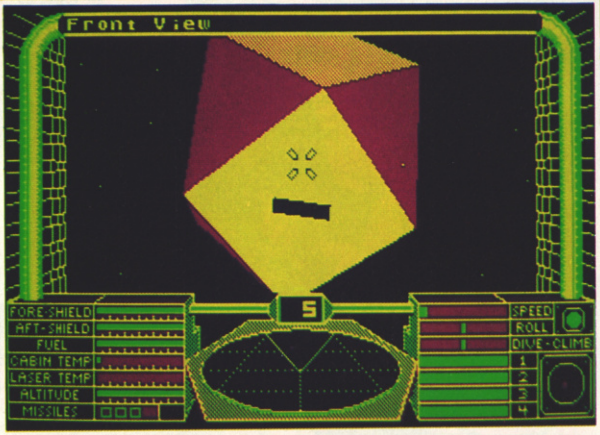
Amiga: The Amiga's blitter has line-drawing and shape-filling functions which make it astonishingly powerful for solid 3D work. The ST can't come near to matching it here, even with its own blitter - nor can it handle 32-colour screens, of course. If you don't have an Amiga, you still might catch a piece of that solid action on one of the Amiga-based coin-ops coming soon from Bally or Arcadia.



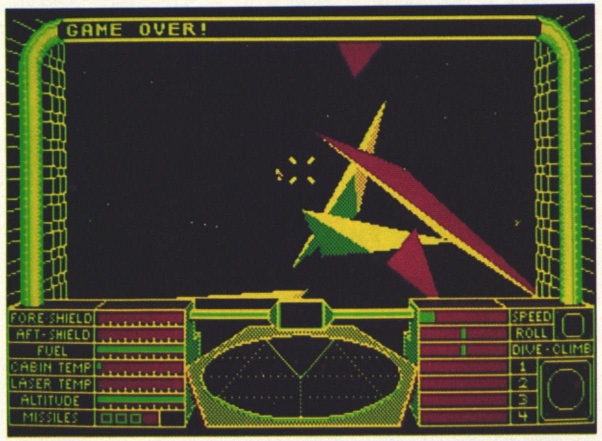
Backlash (ST) from Novagen: impressive stuff from the home of wire-frame hit *Mercenary*.



3D Galax (ST) from Gremlin: 16-bit power gives an old wave-attack game that solid 3D twist.



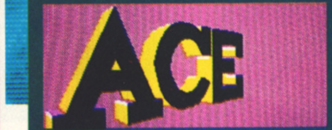
Elite (PC) from Firebird: Approaching a space station - and it's solid!



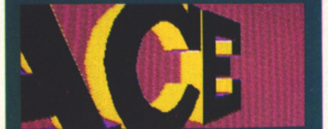
Elite (PC): You're dead! It's almost worth getting killed just to see your ship disintegrating around you.

Freescape Manoeuvres

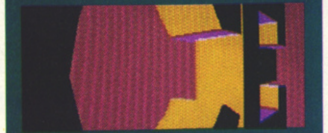
Incentive's Freescape system is very impressive to watch. You can move around a solid 3D landscape and look in all directions, including up and down. This sequence of shots shows you approaching the ACE logo.



The ACE logo from a distance. Lets move in and take a closer look.



We're getting there. And on the way we were impressed by the speed with which the system ran on the Amstrad (from which these shots were taken). Should be a corker on the 16-bit machines. Let's hope the games are as good as the graphics system !



Once implemented in a game, you could climb up inside that big C and look up to see it curving down above you. This sort of interaction with the landscape opens up more than just visual possibilities – the 3D system provides the setting for some tricky puzzles and gameplay as well. *Driller* could be the first game where some of the objects you need are up on the ceiling!

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MIDI MADE SIMPLE

Part 2 of our course takes you one step closer to making music for yourself...

MIDI, as we discovered in the last issue, allows information to be exchanged byte-by-byte in serial fashion between different instruments. Data flows out of a unit's MIDI OUT port and in to the unit through the MIDI (wait for it...) IN port. Some units have a MIDI THRU port provided as well, which simply outputs a copy of the information received at the IN port – thereby providing a means of 'daisy-chaining' instruments together (see illustration overleaf).

But what sort of information is being transmitted? Bad news for boffins, here, I'm afraid. The awful truth is that we are dealing with straight-forward musical information, not non-maskable asynchronous peripheral driven interrupts, doctor. We're talking about notes, start/stop commands, volume and so on. So put away your Inmac RS232 Logic analyser, heave a sigh of relief, and carry on...

Status information

You may remember from last month that MIDI data falls into two main categories, STATUS info and the DATA that may follow it. All status information is recognised by having its seventh bit set, so it follows that status bytes fall in the range 128-256. Not all of these are actually used, however, but you'll find a complete list of MIDI status messages in Table 2 over the page. The general rule to remember is that status bytes tell the receiving instrument that it is going to have get its act together and actually DO something, and data bytes simply fill in the picture, as in status byte NOTE ON, followed by data byte MIDDLE C.

If you look at Table 2, you can see that just about every kind of info about musical performance is MIDIable.

The only thing you may find puzzling about the contents of this table, however, are the Channel Mode messages, since we haven't discussed these before. There are four different modes for MIDI operation, and the significance of these modes depends on whether you're talking about a receiving or transmitting instrument. Check out Table 1 below for more details.

Next month we'll look at MIDI control messages, but really there is precious little else to tell you about MIDI theory. The only problems you're likely to encounter from now on are those of jargon and finance! We'll do our best to help you on both counts by explaining techno-music speak at every opportunity, and by reviewing products that fit your purse. Obviously when you come to putting it into practise with your own equipment there may be minor problems, and that's why we're setting up the ACE MIDI Panel of Experts. You'll find details of this in the box elsewhere in this section. Further information about MIDI possibilities can also be found in the notes accompanying our illustration of a typical MIDI system overleaf.

Polyglotted?

To understand MIDI modes, you'll also need to have a clear idea of what is meant by monophonic, polyphonic, and multi-timbral instruments. Easy...

Imagine your synthesiser as a small box with a tiny musician crouching inside it. He can only play one instrument, and one note at a time, and you tell him which note to play by depressing one of the keys on the keyboard.

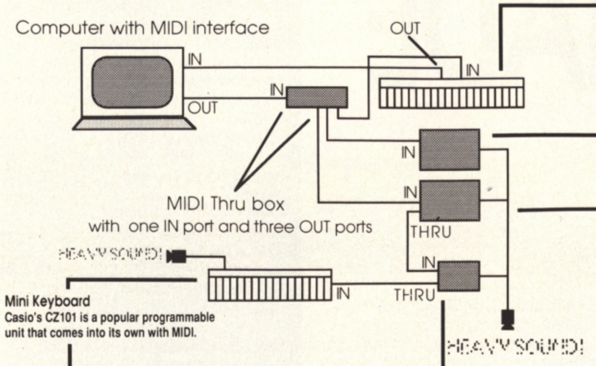
This is a monophonic synthesiser and the man is the synth's 'voice'. However many keys you depress, you'll only get one note out of him and one sound pattern (or 'instrument') at a time.

In a polyphonic synth, the mythical gent is joined by some of his equally mythical companions. There may be six, eight – even sixteen – of them in there, but each 'voice' can still only play one note and what's more they must all be playing the same sound pattern. You can't have one on drums, one on guitar, and the other four belting away on the cello.

That, however, is exactly what you can do with a multitimbral instrument. First, you get more than one voice, and – best of all – you can assign each voice a different instrument. Using MIDI to control a multitimbral synth (especially in Mode 4) can be very exciting – check out our review next month of Roland's MT32.

MIDI Channel Modes	Receiving Instrument	Transmitting Instrument
Mode 1: Omni On/Poly (sometimes called 'Omni mode')	Receives information on all channels and assigns it to each voice in turn until they have all been activated. If more data comes in, it is either ignored or else the synth starts again at voice number 1. Useful for connecting instruments that have been hard-wired to transmit or receive on one channel only – mode 1 ensures that the two instruments will talk to each other. Saves you worrying about channel assignation between two synths.	Sends all information over a 'basic channel', which is either assignable or fixed to channel 1.
Mode 2: Omni On/Mono	Receives information on all channels but assigns it to one voice only.If this means that the receiving instrument is being told to play more than one note at a time, it will choose either the highest, the lowest, or the last note played, depending on the programming by the manufacturer.	Sends voice messages for one voice over its basic channel.
Mode 3: Omni Off/Poly (sometimes called 'Poly mode')	Looks for info on one channel only and assigns the data to its various voices as in Mode 1.	Sends information for all voices over its basic channel.
Mode 4:Omni Off/Mono	Each synth voice is assigned to its own unique channel. Needs to be used with care but can give amazing results.	Assigns a channel to each voice and sends data for that voice down that channel only.

Putting it all together



MIDI Controller Keyboard
A master keyboard can be a useful way of controlling different instruments. Kawai's M8000 – pictured opposite – boasts no less than 4 MIDI OUTs and two INs, not to mention a host of other useful features.

Expander
Also called 'sound modules', expanders are simply the sound-generating circuitry of ordinary synths, minus the keyboard. Controlled via MIDI software, or another keyboard, they often have more voices and other features than a synth costing twice as much.

Drum unit
For those of us who don't have a drummer in the sitting room, this is the next best thing. Pictured here, Cheetah's new MD8 digital drum machine will set you back only £140.

Mini Keyboard
Casio's CZ101 is a popular programmable unit that comes into its own with MIDI.

Sampler
The idea of digitally recording real-life sounds for reproduction across your keyboard or guitar strings, is now a practical reality. Check out our look at budget sampling next month.

MIDI status messages

1. Channel messages – data with a channel number in the range 0–15 occupying the bit positions marked with a C below.

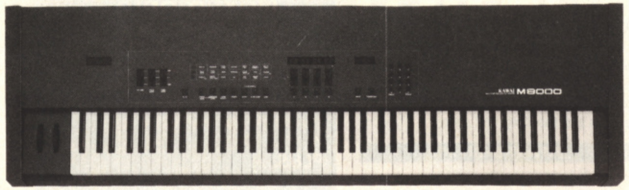
Byte format	No of data bytes following	Description
1000CCCC	2	**Note off** This code shuts off a playing note, the number of which is indicated by the first of the following data bytes, and the velocity of release (e.g. how quickly you lift your finger off the key) by the second.
1001CCCC	2	**Note on** Turns on a note, the note number indicated by the first data byte and the velocity (e.g. how quickly you depress a key) by the second. Note that you can use this code with a velocity of 0 to indicate Note Off.
1010CCCC	2	**Poly key pressure (Aftertouch)** Indicates the pressure applied to each key depressed, as an individual value for each note (for use with expensive keyboards that can respond to this information).
1011CCCC	2	**Control change** Don't panic! We'll be dealing with these next month. For the moment, suffice it to say that this code transmits information relating to foot switch controllers, modulation wheels, and so on...
1011CCCC	2	**Channel mode message** Changes the MIDI operation mode – see table of mode operations on page 33. These are distinguished from *Control Change* messages above by having the first data byte set to a value between 122 and 127.
1100CCCC	1	**Program change** You're playing happily away on your synth using the special preset sound 'Rubber Hammers Hitting Metal Buckets Full of Hot Treacle', which the manufacturer calls 'Voice No. 26: Piano' and you want to change to 'Voice No. 14: Violin' – this is the control code you send to make the synth swap voices.
1101CCCC	1	**Channel pressure (Aftertouch)** Overall pressure applied to the keyboard, as opposed to the pressure applied to individual notes (see polyphonic pressure above).
1110CCCC	2	**Pitch wheel change** Many modern electronic instruments incorporate a pitch bend feature – play a note, turn the wheel, and hear the frequency of the note either rise or fall. The value of the alteration to the pitch is translated into a numerical measurement, transmitted to the synth by the two data bytes following the status byte.

2. System messages

Byte format	No of data bytes following	Description
11110000	Any number in range 0-127	**System exclusive** The status byte alerts the instrument that it is about to receive a manufacturer's exclusive message, and the first data byte contains the manufacturer's ID code (see last issue for an explanation of this). The string of data bytes is terminated by a new status byte. You can't, however, terminate a Sysex message with a Real-Time status byte (which are specially designed to *interrupt* data – see below), otherwise the synth will process the real-time message and then revert to system exclusive mode, expecting more data. If you're feeling really pedantic, you can send an EOX (end of system exclusive) byte – see below.
11110010	2	**Song position pointer** The MIDI circuitry includes an internal *register* (storage section) that holds the number of MIDI beats processed since the start of a song. This message alters the contents of that register, allowing you to jump to any position in the song. The two data bytes can contain any value between 0 and 127, giving you 16129 (127 * 127) different positions.
11110011	1	**Song select** The data byte contains the number of the song you wish to select, naturellement.
11110110	0	**Tune request** You won't be needing this one, methinks. It's NOT a request for Auld Lang Syne, but a command to analogue synthesisers to tune their oscillators. You know it makes sense...
11110111	0	**End of System Exclusive** Not really needed, but some manufacturer's may hard-wire their synths to expect this at the end of their Sysex routines. Probably best to use it, just in case.

3. System real time messages. Those of you who were privileged to read last month's column will remember that these little beauties can interrupt any flow of data or status bytes, tell the synth to adjust it's clock (or one of the other operations outlined below) and then let it get on with what it was doing before the interruption.

Byte format	No of data bytes following	Description
11111000	0	**Timing clock** Keeps everything in sync, by sending 24 pulses for every crotchet (or quarter note if you're American).
11111010	0	**Start** On your marks, get set...
11111011	0	**Continue** Er...carry on...
11111100	0	**Stop** ...that awful row!
11111110	0	**Active sensing** Sends regular pulses to stop everyone falling asleep. Not often needed, but some synths will expect to hear it and, if they don't get one of these at least once every 300ms, they will switch off their voices and revert to default operation.
11111111	0	**System reset** Aaaghgghg! You didn't...! To be used with caution – if ever.



The diagram on the left shows a theoretical MIDI system. Of course you don't HAVE to have all that gear – you can spend a lifetime exploring the possibilities of a single instrument connected to your computer – but let's face it, variety is the spice of sound. So what's going on here?

The MIDI signal from the computer goes out to a MIDI Thru box, which simply splits the signal and outputs it along (in this case) three separate lines to three different instruments. These go to the master keyboard, the expander, and the drum unit. Note the use of the THRU ports on the drum unit and the sampler to 'daisy-chain' these together with the second keyboard.

Both the expander and the drum unit have their own sound output lines, which you can put through your amp or hi-fi system. And of course most portable synths have their own inbuilt loudspeakers, as here.

This system would enable you to enter note and other playing parameters from the master keyboard into the computer's sequencer software, or to compose directly on the computer using a suitable program. This data could then be output to the expander, drum machine and other MIDI units to generate the sound. Not very satisfactory really – since what you really want to do is control the expander from the master keyboard directly. If the computer's MIDI interface had a THRU port, you could run the output from that to the expander....or you could connect the master keyboard to the expander directly...or...

The point here is that actually setting up MIDI equipment takes a little thought and depends very much on what you actually want the system to *do*. Do you want to use your computer and software as a digital multi-track tape recorder? Or as a composing tool? Or are you simply interested in playing several instruments simultaneously for that FATTER sound?

There are basically two rules in operation here, which you will encounter again and again. They are:
1) That for every MIDI problem there shall be a simple solution; and
2) That for every MIDI solution, there shall be insufficient THRU sockets.

...which is why in future issues we shall look at gadgets that will make hooking up your system that much easier. In the meantime, why not grab a paper and pencil and sketch out your fantasy MIDI set-up. A small token prize to the reader (if any) who submits one amusing enough to be printed on these pages!

Making the right connections...

There are dozens of suitable software packages to enable you to make musical use of your micro. We shall be covering these in future issues of ACE, but in the meantime it's enough to say that they all have one thing in common – the need for a MIDI interface for data transmission. Most computers, unfortunately, do not have MIDI built-in, which means of course that you have to look around for one suitable for your micro.

One exception – oh, alright, the ONLY exception – is the Atari ST range (520, 1040, and Mega), all of which have the necessary sockets tucked away round the back. The ST has a standard five-pin DIN MIDI IN and the normal MIDI THRU socket is combined with the MIDI OUT by using a couple of spare pins. This means that you might have to do a bit of cable butchery if you don't have a MIDI switch box (of which more later).

The convenience of the ST's built-in MIDI sockets has made it by far the most popular micro for serious musicians; there are dozens of MIDI software packages available from Hybrid Arts, Steinberg, Sonus, C-Lab, Michtron, Dr T, and others. Some of the more expensive, such as the £500+ SMPTETrack from Hybrid Arts, also allow you to use SMPTE, a standard for synchronising music and video. **Syndromic Music** carries a wide range of ST hardware and software and is uncommonly willing to demonstrate it all. With its built-in disk drive, WIMP interface, and huge memory the ST is certainly the choice of the professionals, but what about the rest of us? Help is at hand in the form of a range of fairly inexpensive hardware-software packages from a variety of UK and US manufacturers.

SPECTRUM

There are two main contenders for the Spectrum owner – the **XRI** and **Cheetah** interfaces. While the Spectrum Plus 2 has a form of MIDI built-in, it's incorporated into the Telecom-style RS-232 socket and is MIDI OUT only, so it's pretty useless. Effectively, having a MIDI OUT only means that you would never be able to feed musical data from your keyboard into the computer – even supposing you were able to overcome the cabling and software compatibility problems.

No such limitations, however, apply to the Cheetah MIDI interface. It's an undistinguished-looking black box which plugs into the Spectrum's user port. It features separate sockets for MIDI IN, OUT, and THRU, and comes with a good tape-based software package that allows you to record eight tracks of music, either in 'real-time' as you play or in 'step time', note by note on the screen.

The resulting data can be assigned to any of the sixteen available MIDI channels, and playback can be synchronised to an external source such as a drum machine. At £49.95 this unit is an excellent first step for Spectrum owners.

XRI's Micon MIDI interface is also around at £49.95, but it has a better specification;

This means you!

If you're entering the world of electronic music, there's nothing more helpful than having someone by your side to give you good, down-to-earth practical advice. We're looking for people who can do just that.

If you want to earn yourself a reputation, some extra pennies, and the chance of previewing some of the newest kit – and reckon you've the knowledge and experience to answer other readers' problems, why not apply to join our MIDI Panel of Experts? You don't have to be Shakespeare, but you should be able to spell cintheseiza correctly and have experience of using home keyboards, synths, and other MIDI kit. Let's hear from you...Write to Steve Cooke, ACE, 4 Queen Street, BATH, BA1 1EJ with details of yourself and your interests – and hurry! We want you for Issue 3!

MIDI IN, OUT, THRU and sync IN and OUT. The sync line follows a standard established by Roland and operates on a basis of 24 pulses per quarter note. There's an excellent range of software available for the XRI interface – realtime and steptime sequencers, Casio CZ and Yamaha DX voice program editors, and a MIDI database which stores patches from any MIDI synth.

This brings us to the point that softwre designed for one MIDI interface will not necessarily work on another; MIDI my be a standard, but its implementation on home micros depends very much on the whims of the hardware designers. So make sure that your hardware and software get along together before buying.

An unusual alternative to the above two packages is the **RAM Music Machine**, which includes a MIDI interface, sound sampler and sequencer all in one package for £49.95. Inevitably in cramming all these functions into the unit some versatility is sacrificed.

COMMODORE 64

After the Atari ST, the second best micro for musical purposes is the Commodore 64. It's standard disk drive, relatively high memory and selection of interface ports make it a good budget system. Most 64 MIDI interfaces plug into the cartridge port and include IN, OUT, and THRU sockets.

The cheapest is the **Datel**, at £24.99, which supports most software from Jellinghaus, Seil, and C-Lab, as well as the useful Rainbird Advanced Music System. The Datel features the three MIDI sockets, plus a Roland sync, on trailing leads.

One excellent option is the **C-Lab** interface with built-in Supertracks softwre. Just plug in and you're ready to go. Of course, you still need a disk drive to store your music data.

A huge range of Commodore 64 MIDI packages is available from the American company **Passport.** Unfortunately, to use them you need the £110 Passport interface (nothing else will work). This is a pity since it's no more complex than the Datel, and since the software packages themselves aren't cheap, the whole deal works out fairly expensively.

Also available at around £99 from many music shops, thoug officially discontinued, is the **Seil** interface. This is a large blue box with a cartridge port connector on a ribbon cable. It has the usual MIDI IN, THRU and sync, but usefully it features three MIDI OUTs. Obviously this is handy if you have several MIDI synths and don't have a MIDI switch box as shown in our illustration on page 34.

AMSTRAD

There are two choices of interface for the Amstrad CPC micros. Many Amstrad owners will have seen the notorious Mike Beecher of **ElectroMusic Research** demonstrating his wares at the PCW and Amstrad shows. EMR produce a whole series of units and software covering the Amstrad CPC, MSX, BBC, Spectrum and other 8-bit machines. They also provide a wide selection of software, both sequencers and patch editors. We'll be looking at their products in more detail in a future issue.

Alternatives for the Amstrad CPC and PCW micros are available from **DHCP,** whose range includes interfaces for both machines, sequencers, and patch editors for obvious synths like the Casio CZ's as well as less commone ones like the Korg DW series.

ATARI 8-BIT

Apart from the ST, eight bit machines such as the 400, 800, and XL series aren't left out either. There's an excellent system available from **Two-Bit**, the MIDI master, comprising a connecting cable interface and a wide range of disk software – including eight track sequencers and sound editors for the Casio CZ and Yamaha DX synths.

BBC

Best known for the BBC is the **UMI** series, a very professional set-up starting with the 2B, as used by performers such as Blancmange and Vince Clarke. A cheaper version, the 3S, has just come out at around £195. This includes software on EPROMS, and the hardware featuring MIDI IN, two OUTs, clock in/out, sync out, and start/stop footswitch sockets.

EMR also do a BBC interface, quite a bit cheaper than the UMI system but with less facilities.

PC / MACINTOSH / AMIGA

Best bet for PC compatible owners is **Passport** once again – high specs but high prices to go with them. An interface for your PC compatible will cost you £245 and a software package such as Master Tracks PC another £299. Hardly a bargain when you could buy a whole Atari ST for less.

You're in a similar position if you own a Macintosh. **Sonus'** MacFace has two INs, sic OUT/THRUs and data transmission LEDs and works with software from OpCode, Mark of the Unicorn, and Intelligent Music packages – as well as Sonus' own, of course. UK prices have yet to announced, but expect them to reflect the cost of the Mac this side of the pond.

Amiga owners can pick up interfaces for as little as £49.95. **Supersoft** is distributing the Skyles Electric Works interface at just that price, featuring one IN, two OUTs, and one THRU socket. Pity, however, that there's no decent music software for the Amiga just yet.

It's clear then that practically every micro on the UK market has a matching MIDI interface which allows it to become part of a music system that five years ago would have cost tens of thousands of pounds. Actually producing good music is down to you and your software packages...-watch this space!

Mark Jenkins

Next month...

...we check out *Budget Sampling* – can Rover's digitised woof put bite into Bach? And can you afford to feed Rover after you've bought the kit? A full featured article on what sampling is, how to do it, what it produces, and how much it costs...

PLUS...

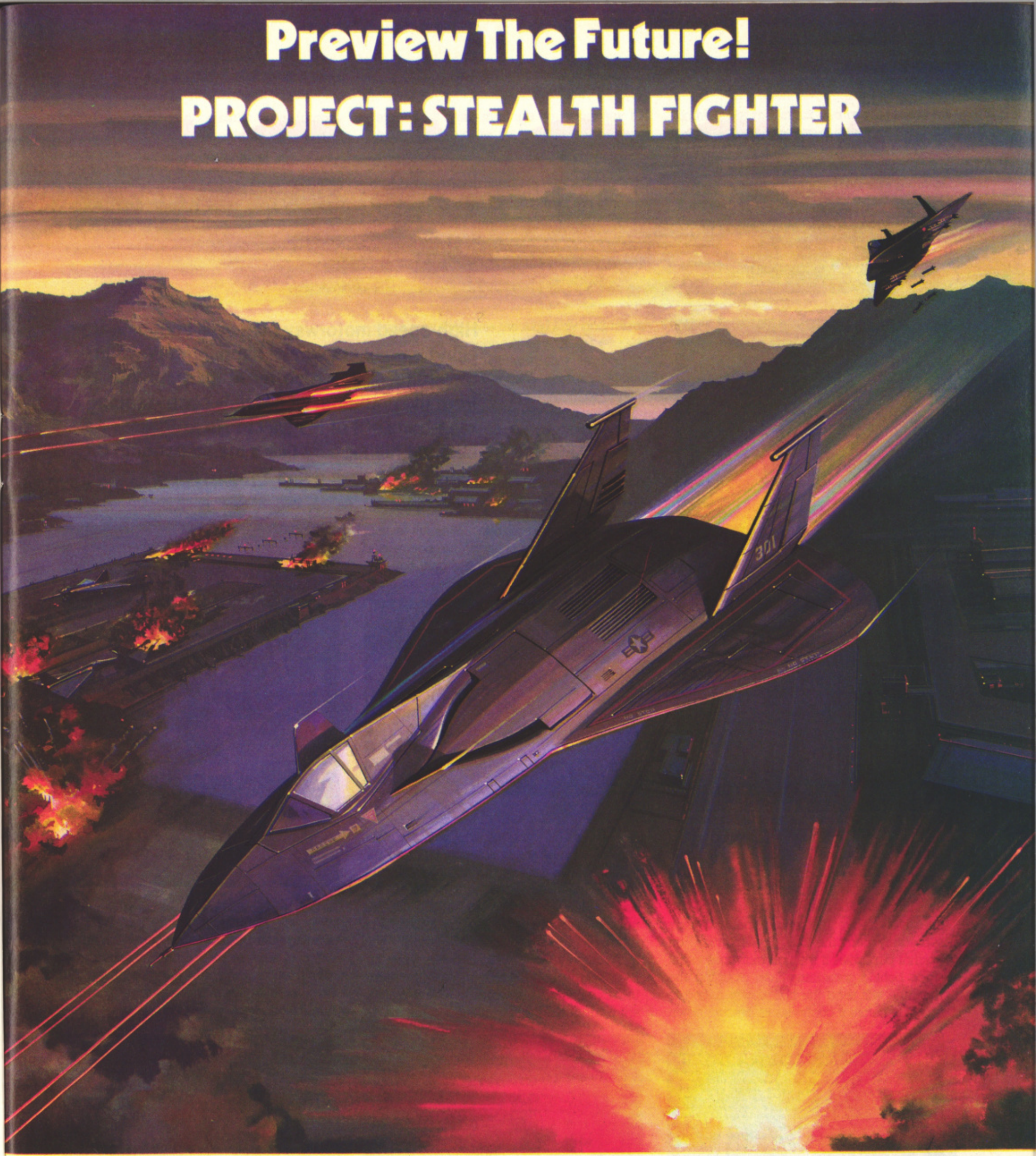
– Roland's MT32 sound module – LA Synthesis for under £500

– we start a long-term exploration of the techniques behind *sound creation.* Discover the hidden meaning of FM synthesis, attack, PCM, and other mysterious terms, all explained so clearly that even a cow-bell could understand them.

CHEETAH MK5II

Master Keyboard – Mini Price

Cheetah are really attacking the budget end of the MIDI market this autumn with a whole range of equipment, most of which was previewed at this year's British Music Fair. Shown here is the MK5II MIDI master keyboard which features 61 full-size keys, fully polyphonic operation, pitch bend wheel, 128 patch facility, octave switch and other goodies for only £199.95. The product is still in prototype form, but is expected to roll of the production line as you read this. We'll be covering this unit, and comparing it with others, in a future issue.



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ARCADE ACE

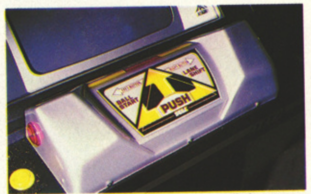
High-speed motorway madness and time-travelling pinball are what's happening down in the arcades. Cub reporter Andy Smith reports from the coin-ops, where he's been zapping road-hogs out of his way in *Road Blaster* and bashing his flippers like a manic penguin in the video pinball game *Time Scanner*.

TIME SCANNER

Sega
20p per game

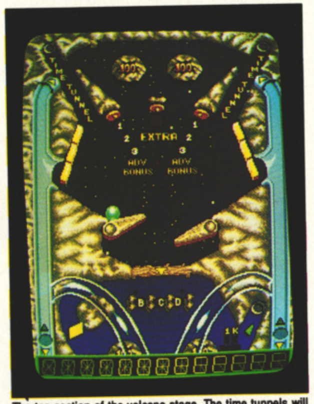
What really makes a game of pinball fun is the ability to nudge the table in an attempt to keep your ball in play. You need *feeling* to play pinball. Video pinball, unfortunately, never managed to convey that important physical aspect of the game and consequently left you feeling cold.

All that has now changed with the advent of Sega's *Time Scanner*, a video pinball game that allows you to manhandle the machine in an attempt to keep your ball rolling. Flipper controls are situated either side of a central control box – looks a little like a jazzy shoe box – and it's this you hang onto as if it were the bottom of the pin table. By shifting this box left-right or up-down you effectively move the whole screen display separately from the ball. For example, on normal pin tables if the ball manages to get stuck behind something then nudging the machine will send the ball slowly rolling to one side before it continues its descent down the table. The same effect is possible with *Time Scanner*; by shifting the box – and therefore the screen – a trapped ball will slowly roll to one side before travelling toward your flippers.

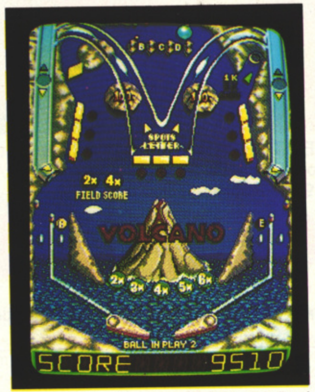


The snappy control unit which you use to tilt the screen. Flipper buttons are on the side.

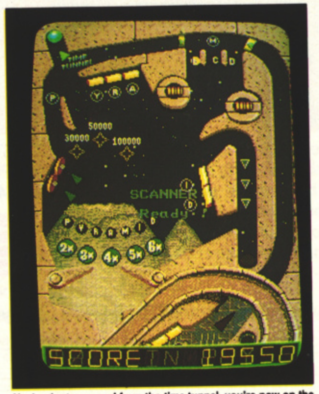
The game provides you with various stages, each of which is like a separate pin table. First is the volcano stage which – like all the others – is divided into two screen-sized sections. You fire your ball up the side track and using the flippers try to amass as many points as possible before you inevitably let the ball slip between your flippers. As the ball disappears off the bottom, the screen scrolls upwards to reveal a different arrangement of bumpers and tokens. By sending your ball down the correct chute the letters of the word *VOLCANO* light up. Get all the letters and you'll have completed that stage of the game; but lose your ball here and it's lost for good.



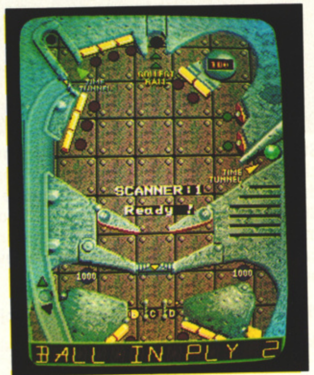
The top section of the volcano stage. The time tunnels will transport you to another stage (if you can get your ball in them).



The bottom of the volcano stage. The ball has just slipped through the top flippers and is headed your way.



Having just emerged from the time tunnel, you're now on the top section of the Saqqara stage



Once more it's out of the time tunnel and on to the top section of the ruins stage. The 'collect ball' hole is what you aim for once you've completed the stage.

But you don't necessarily have to complete the stage to move onto another; if your ball lands in a 'time tunnel' you will be presented with one of the other stages – either the 'ruins' stage or the Egyptian 'saqqara' stage. Your mission is to complete each stage, but each one must be completed differently. If you manage to complete the three stages you're presented with the 'special' stage.

Sega have managed to bring to life the feel of several pin tables in one upright cabinet (suitably tilted monitor) and the graphics and especially sound are superb. There's nothing like the crack of a metal pinball hitting the glass table top of a pinball machine, but Sega have managed to come extremely close. If you're a pinball fan who thinks that arcade games never last long enough to get your money's worth then play *Time Scanner* and think again.

ROAD BLASTER

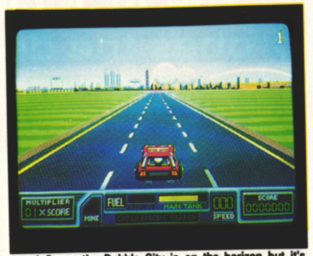
Atari
50p for 2 games

Housed in a huge wedge-shaped cabinet, this sit-down shoot-'em-up puts power at your feet and death at your fingertips. Once you've clambered into the cabinet your mission is to drive a car through several stages of scrolling roads in a style somewhat reminiscent of *Out Run*.

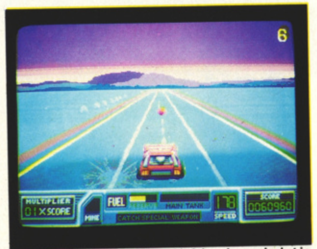
Your controls consist of an accelerator pedal and a steering wheel. Two fire buttons are situated on the front of the wheel and two on the top. Using the buttons you must shoot all the other road users with your front-firing cannon. Sometimes a green or red ball will appear from an exploding car and continue to race along the road; catch it and you get extra fuel. As you only have a limited amount of fuel – including your reserve tank – grabbing these balls is essential. Run out of fuel and you run out of game.

Of course there are loads of other cars that get in your way (the game does bear some resemblance to 'real' life) and it's far easier to shoot these than avoid them. Motorbikes also make an appearance later in the game and again your cannon is the best way to despatch them. Some cars are harder to destroy, particularly the purple armour-plated roadsters that crop up now and again.

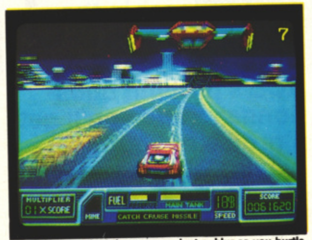
Hitting these with your cannon results in a metalic ping but nothing else – the only way to despatch this type of car is to gain some extra weapons. Some way into the stage a jet flies over the roadway and releases an extra weapon; steer your car properly and the weapon will land on your roof. The extra weapons vary and include a Nitrous Oxide burner which sends your car hurtling at a fantastic rate through the stage in true *Mad Max* fashion (if the car had wings it'd beat Concorde; the impression of speed is incredible.) Other extra weapons include a U.Z. cannon which fires at a much increased rate, and smart bombs which will launch themselves ahead of you and explode in the distance; when you reach the explosion any surrounding cars are just glowing shadows that pose no problems at all.



Level One – the Bubble City is on the horizon but it's gonna take a lot of driving skill and trigger work to get there.



Level Six – having narrowly avoided the mine you're hot in pursuit of a bonus fuel bubble.

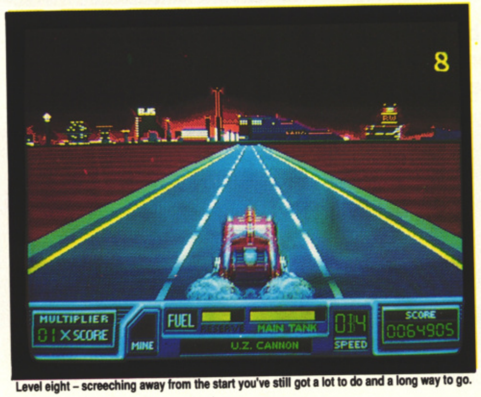


Level Seven – the other cars are just a blur as you hurtle past waiting to catch the special weapon that the jet above is just about to drop.

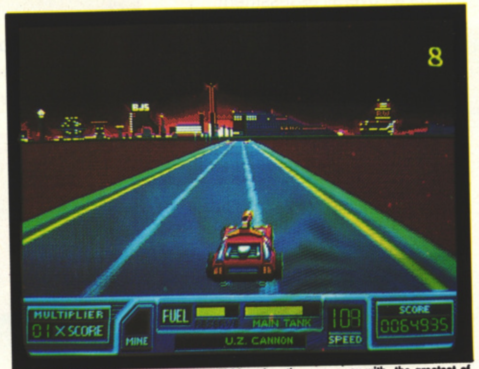
Roadside obstacles vary from lamposts to gun emplacements that keep up a barage of cross fire through which you must pass unscathed. Crash or get shot and you restart on the road from the same position, but with a little less fuel. Survive to the end of the stage and you start on the next and slightly harder one.

Road Blaster sports stunning graphics with the backgrounds changing for each stage. Desert scenery gives way to forest which in turn gives way to cityscapes etc. Sound is equally impressive; the screech of rubber on tarmac as you pull away on your rear wheels at the start is frighteningly realistic, as are the machine gun effects and explosions.

For sheer speed and exhilarating action *Road Blaster* is a winner; it makes *Death Race 2000* look positively harmless.



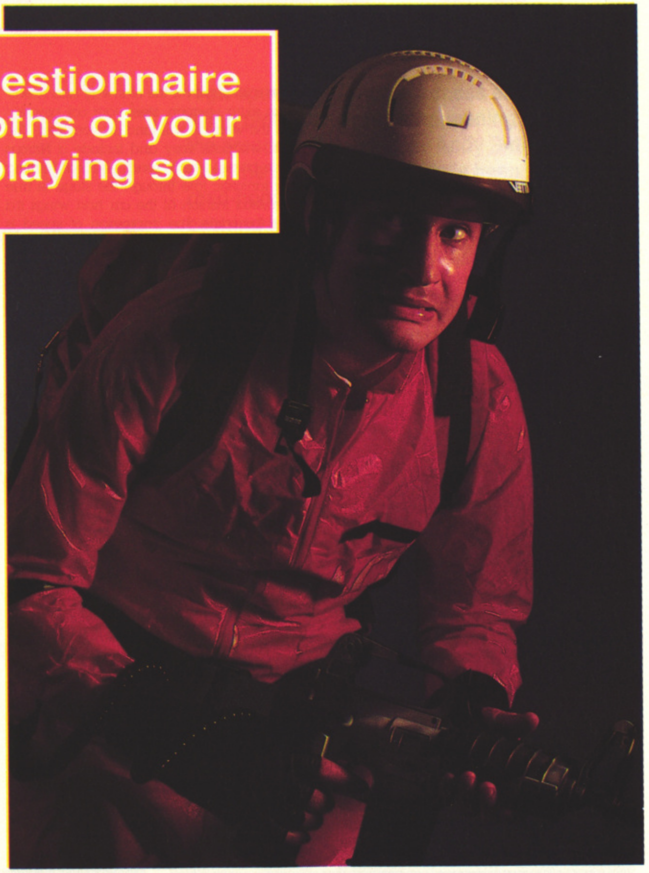
Level eight – screeching away from the start you've still got a lot to do and a long way to go.



Level Eight -that U.Z. cannon on top will blow the other cars away with the greatest of ease.

Winner or Wimp?

The ACE Questionnaire probes the depths of your games-playing soul



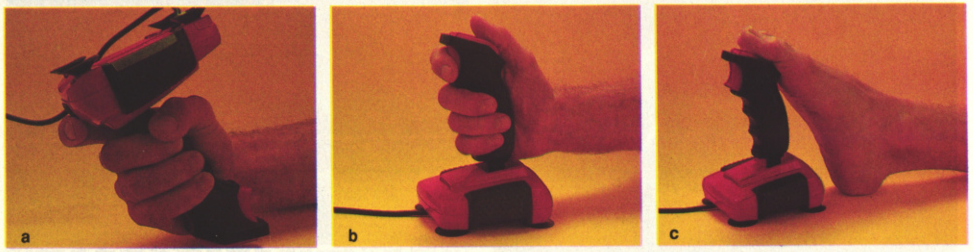
What sets the games champions apart from the also-rans? How can you tell if you're a winner or a loser in the great game of life? Easy - just complete ACE's probing questionnaire and you'll get a profile of your game playing status and potential.

How to do it

Just select the answer you think is correct from each question and write them down on a piece of paper. On the last page of this questionnaire you'll find the right answers, along with the scores. A rating is given for each section, as well as an overall assessment.

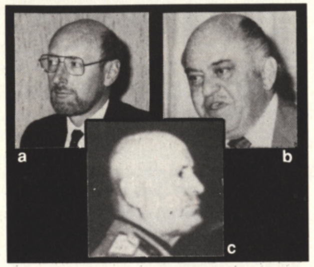
Games Trivia

You've got to be *involved* in the whole culture of games to get anywhere at all. This section checks out your background knowledge, savoir-faire and style.

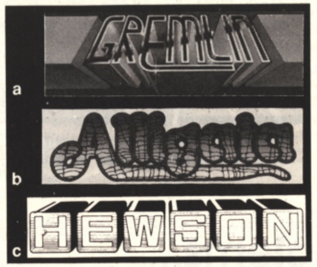


1. Which of these photos shows the right way to hold a joystick?

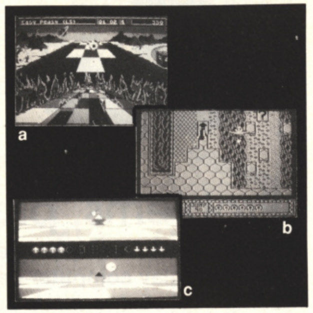
2. Which of these bald gentlemen would like you all to buy a 16-bit computer?



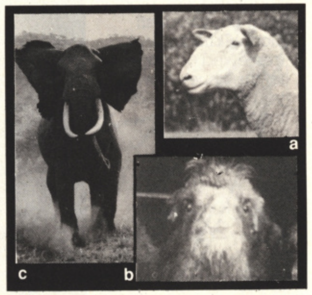
3. Wandering programmer Tony Crowther has **not** worked for which of the following software houses



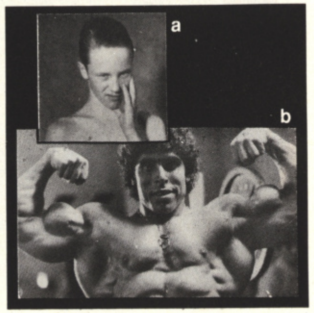
4. Bouncing ball games are very nearly a dime a dozen these days – and most of them seem to be by Gremlin. But which of the following is **not** a Gremlin game?



5. Shaggy programmer Jeff Minter has featured a veritable mengerie in his games over the years. Which of the following creatures has he **not** given starring role to?



6. Here are two photographs of a games player, one of them taken **before** and one of them **after** he started reading ACE. Which one is before?



Personality Profile

If you haven't got the right stuff you're going to find it real hard to live with the games go-getters. This psycho-profile will reveal whether you have the dedication, stamina and motivation you'll need to make it to the top.

1. You're just about to clock up a personal best on *Arkanoid* when you're told a policemen is at the door to ask you about the £100,000 missing from the firm's Christmas Club (of which you are secretary). Do you

a) Pull the plugs and face the music?
b) Calmly finish the game
c) Press fire and shout 'Come in and get me, copper!'

2. It's Friday afternoon and you've got just £1.99 in your pocket. Do you

a) Buy 1/3 of a share in BP?
b) Buy a bottle of brown ale and 10 Woodbines
c) Get the latest budget hit

3. It's 2 a.m. in the morning and you are on the brink of solving for the first time *The Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy*. Your nearest and dearest shouts in your ear 'It's time to go to bed. Now!' Do you reply

a) Yes, nearest and dearest one. I'll put the cat out and be right up.
b) You must be joking.
c) Nothing

4. On a Concorde flight to New York the pilot, co-pilot and navigator, hostesses and that man who was obviously an off- duty flier all collapse at the same time. Do you

a) Stand up and calmly announce 'I'll take over – I've played *Flight Simulator.*'
b) Stand up and calmly announce 'I'll take over – I've played *Starglider*'
c) Panic

5. When you meet an alien do you

a) Zap first and ask questions later
b) Take it to your leader
c) Read the instructions

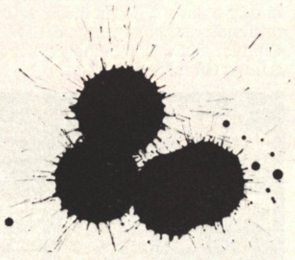
6. Encountering a new machine in the arcades do you

a) Hang around for a few minutes and see what the punters make of it
b) Instantly convert all your cash into 10p pieces and feed the machine
c) Decide to have a nice quiet game of *Frogger* instead

Psycho Quotient

In some games you need a mean streak to succeed. This test shows whether you've got it – and at the same time reveals what the inner you is *really* like

Look carefully at this ink-blot.



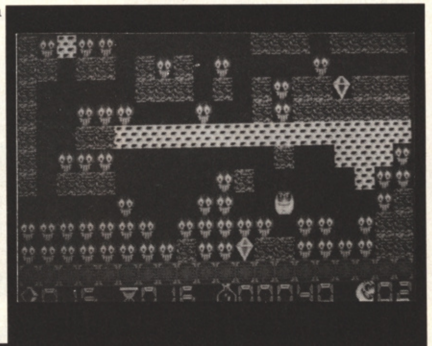
What do you see in it?

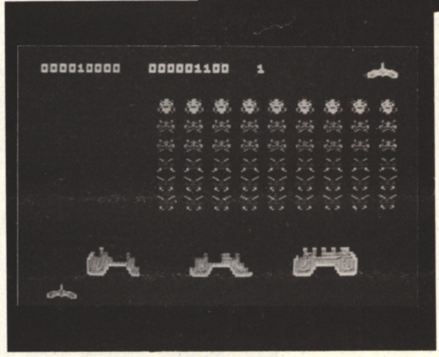
a) A cute and lovable creature from Alpha Centauri which you would dearly like to keep for a pet.
b) A disgusting bug which has fallen out of a tramp's beard.
c) A highly dangerous Alpha Centaurian mutant which must be destroyed at all costs before it reaches the core of the reactor and initiates meltdown, so causing the demise of civilization as we know it.

Problems, problems...

Time was when all you needed was the brain power of a chimp to play computer games, but increasingly we are being expected to *think*. Some of us have trouble with this, so here are a couple of puzzlesome problems to see if you've got the necessary grey matter.

1. Here's a wee problem from *Boulderdash* clone *Skulldiggery* (reviewed on page 62 iof this issue). How do you get all the diamonds?





2. In the classic game shown here should you

a) Move left
b) Move right
c) Stay still

How you rated

Games Trivia

1 a) 4 b) 8 c) 2
2 a) 4 b) 8 c) 2
3 a) 2 b) 4 c) 8
4 a) 4 b) 4 c) 0
5 a) 0 b) 0 c) 8
6 a) 0 b) 8

Maximum Score 48; if you got up around here your knowledge of the computer entertainment world is well up to scratch. But don't get cocky – it needs constant vigilance to keep up with events.

Less than 38; you really do need to bone up a bit. You've not paying enough attention. Or you've simply been playing the wrong games all these years.

Less than 24; where you've been all this time? You are *seriously* out of teach. Only remedy – large doses of ACE every month.

Personality Profile

1 a) 0 b) 4 c) 2
2 a) 0 b) 2 c) 4
3 a) 0 b) 2 c) 4
4 a) 2 b) 4 c) 0
5 a) 4 b) 0 c) 2
6 a) 4 b) 2 c) 0

Max 24; you have total dedication. You are dangerously obsessed. Youare interested in computer games to the exclusion of all other pursuits. You need to seek medical help very quickly.

18-24; you have stamina, dedication and perserverance. You should go far.

18 and below ; you are an idler and a loafer. Pull your socks up and your finger out. Have you thought of consulting a games psychologist?

Psycho Quotient

a) Completely wrong – you're far too nice.
b) You must be off your rocker
c) You have the right attitude – but you shouldn't take these games *too* seriously, you know.

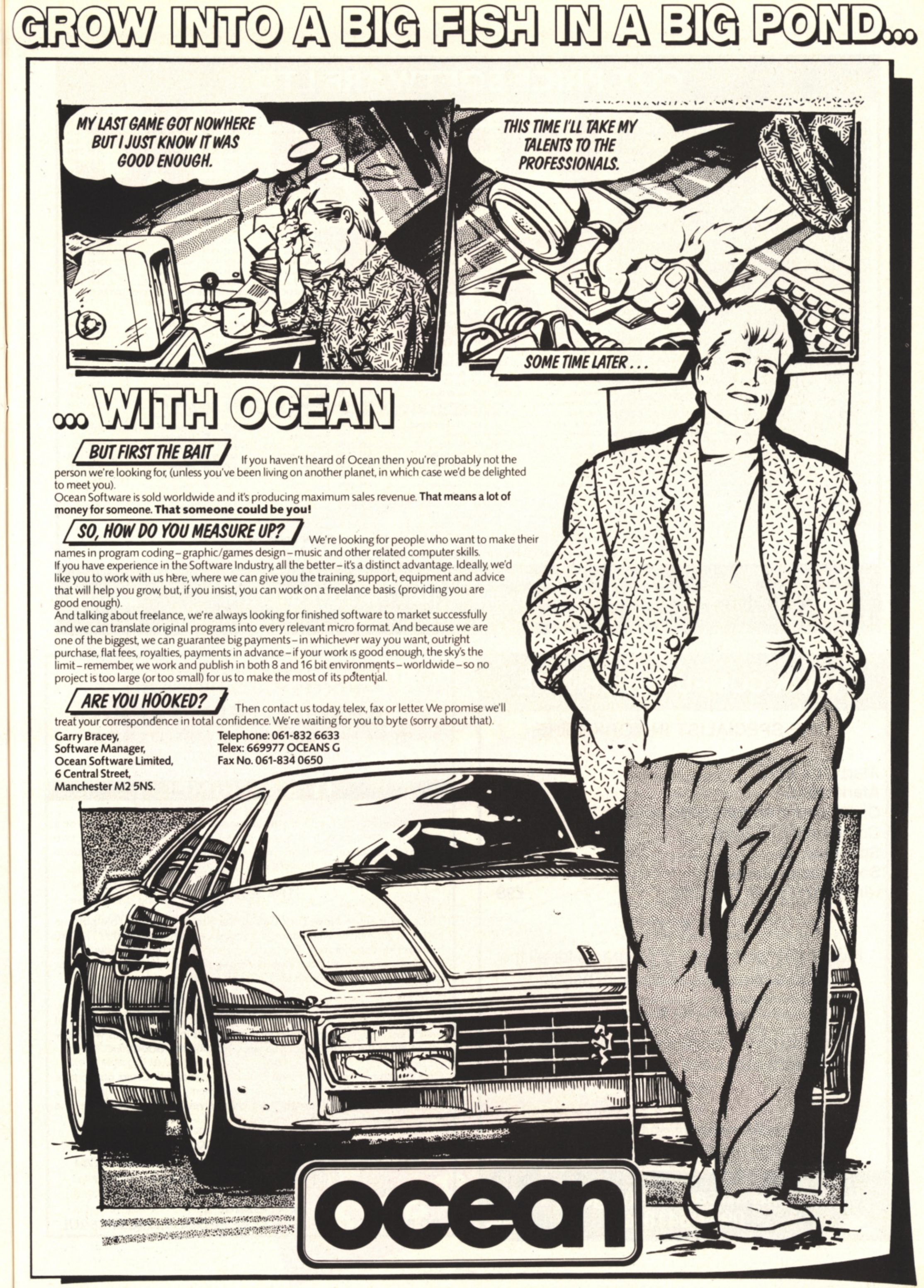
Problems, Problems

1.There is no solution. Give yourself
8 points if you realised within a minute
4 points if you realised within five minutes
0 points if it took longer.

2. b) 8
Well, if you couldn't figure this one out you're in bad shape. See a doctor. Now.

Overall Profile

80 – 88 You're stark staring bonkers.
70 – 80 You show a high level of knowledge and skill. But don't let computer entertainment take you over.
60 – 70 Not bad at all. With a little work you could make the big time.
Below 60 An awful lot of hard work neded if you're to get anywhere at all.


GROW INTO A BIG FISH IN A BIG POND...
MY LAST GAME GOT NOWHERE BUT I JUST KNOW IT WAS GOOD ENOUGH.
THIS TIME I'LL TAKE MY TALENTS TO THE PROFESSIONALS.
SOME TIME LATER . . .
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BUT FIRST THE BAIT If you haven't heard of Ocean then you're probably not the person we're looking for, (unless you've been living on another planet, in which case we'd be delighted to meet you).
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THE SETTING

The game is set in New York City in the late 1990's. You role-play the part of a gangleader who controls a group of misguided youths. The city has severley deteriorated. The brave citizens who remain are now in a life and death struggle with the ever increasing number of drug-crazed street gangs. The New York Police Department is severley undermanned.

Your main goal is to become a very powerful gang. This is measured by building your gang's turf into one of the largest and by becoming one of the richest, toughest, and most notorious gangs in the city. This will allow you to enter the MOB, and maybe later, become the Godfather.

On a typical turn you could send your Pros, Punks and 'Cruits out to take over a couple of city blocks and ambush an enemy gang, rob or firebomb a building, buy and sell drugs, have yourselves a party, terrorize the residents, and much more.

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SCREEN TEST

SCREEN TEST INDEX

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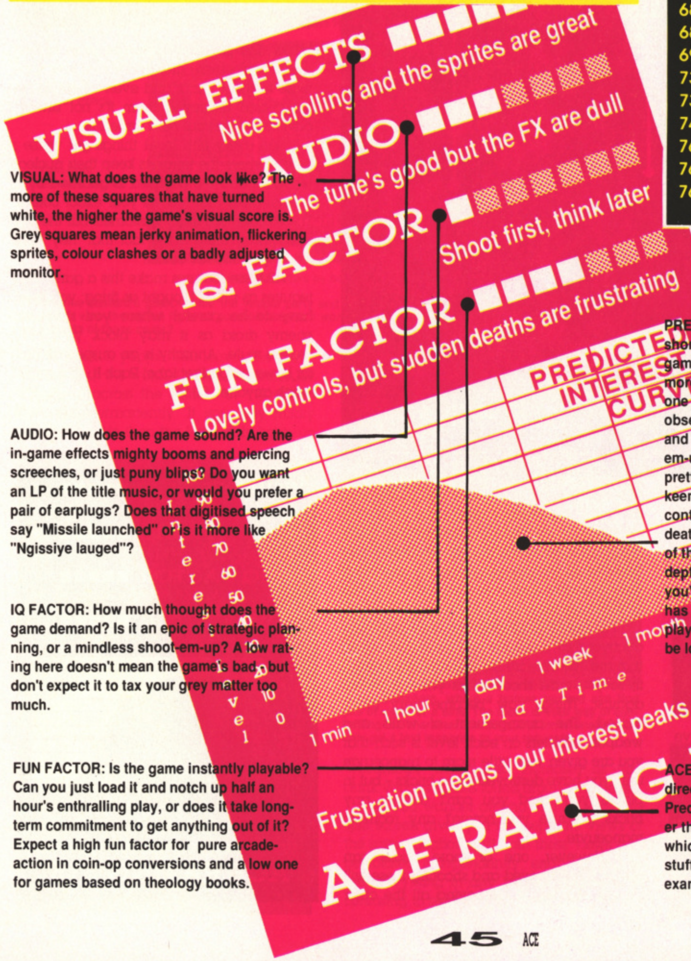
The PIC chart explained

A new systm takes a bit of getting used to, so we've cooked up some ratings for a fictional game, *Standard Issue Scrolling Coin-Op Conversion* to help you along. You know the kind of thing; good scrolling, fast and noisy action, picking up extra weapons. Now check out the ACE treatment this game gets...



VISUAL: What does the game look like? The more of these squares that have turned white, the higher the game's visual score is. Grey squares mean jerky animation, flickering sprites, colour clashes or a badly adjusted monitor.

AUDIO: How does the game sound? Are the in-game effects mighty booms and piercing screeches, or just puny blips? Do you want an LP of the title music, or would you prefer a pair of earplugs? Does that digitised speech say "Missile launched" or is it more like "Ngissiye lauged"?

IQ FACTOR: How much thought does the game demand? Is it an epic of strategic planning, or a mindless shoot-em-up? A low rating here doesn't mean the game's bad - but don't expect it to tax your grey matter too much.

FUN FACTOR: Is the game instantly playable? Can you just load it and notch up half an hour's enthralling play, or does it take long-term commitment to get anything out of it? Expect a high fun factor for pure arcade-action in coin-op conversions and a low one for games based on theology books.

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE, or PIC for short. One look will give an instant idea of the game in question. The higher the curve, the more of your attention the game holds at any one time: the top of the box means total obsession, while the bottom means complete and utter indifference. In our fictional shoot-em-up here those graphics mean you'll be pretty impressed after a minute. You're even keener after an hour, thanks to those nice controls. But frustration at those sudden deaths has taken the edge off this by the end of the first day, and after a week the lack of depth is starting to show as well. By a month you've seen just about everything the game has to offer and want a new challenge, but the playability and great graphics mean you'll still be loading it up occasionally in a year's time.

ACE RATING is out of a possible 1000 and is directly related to the area underneath the Predicted Interest Curve. Obviously, the higher the score – the better the game. Games which are ACE Rated over 900 are really hot stuff – see Skulldiggery or RED L.E.D. for examples.

ANARCHY

Block bashing gets a new twist from **RACK IT**

REBELS have taken over the world. They are ruling the helpless planet of Sentinel Four through force of arms; it's your mission to break into their security complex and destroy their entire supply of weapons and explosives.

Despite the dubious story *Anarchy* is one of the best budget titles to appear in a long while. In play you must guide an A.C.E. MK2 Interceptor (remarkably similar to a Tank) around a horizontally scrolling complex made up of blocks, some destructible, some not. Destructible blocks represent arms containers and to complete a level you have to destroy all of these; indestructible blocks are , for the most part, there just to get in the way.

Wandering around the brick complex are numerous security droids. These aren't very fast-moving but do tend to head in the direction of your tank, though very indirectly. Contact with a droid is fatal - but they can be shot and doing so will turn them for at least a short time in to an indestructible brick which can be moved away from your tank in a straight line by repeated shooting.

You have two minutes to complete each level, after which time the building's security systems will detect you and you will lose one of your three lives. But if you manage to destroy all the weapon containers in time an exit will appear and you can escape to the next complex. Caution is advised here because as soon as you shoot the last brick your weapon becomes inoperative – so make sure your route to the exit is droid free.

All this may sound very easy until you discover that your tank can only shoot bricks that are one or more brick widths away from it; so you can't shoot bricks you're right up against. Things now become very tricky indeed. The arrangement of walls and weapon canisters on each level is such that you are given very little room to manoeuvre until you have destroyed some bricks – but in places you'll find you can't destroy any bricks because you haven't any room to manoeuvre .

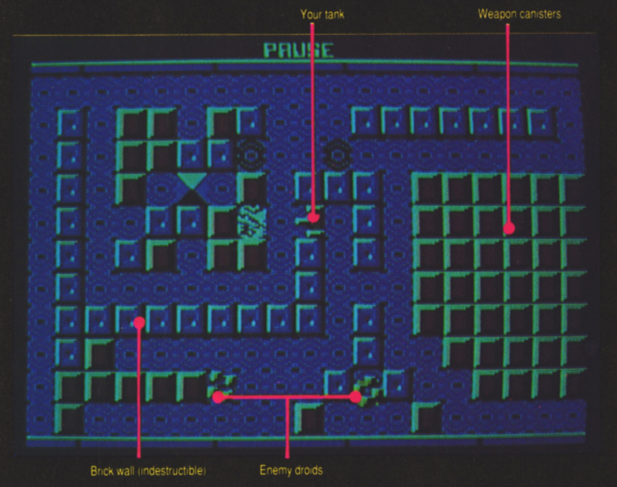
However, one or more bricks can always be destroyed and shooting these will provide the key to destroying all the other bricks. The problem, of course, is in finding which bricks these are, and where you have to be to shoot them; and even when you've found and destroyed them it's not always obvious where your next targets lie.

On every fifth level things get worse ; here is where the terrorists keep their nuclear weapons and the complex is guarded by a special droid that follows your exact course. These droids are tricky customers but the key to avoiding them is the fact that they WILL follow your EXACT course.

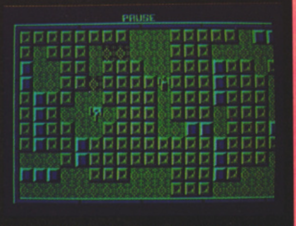
All these features make this a game that requires as much thought as firing; you even have to be careful where you shoot an enemy droid as it may block your only escape route. *Anarchy* is an auspicious start for Hewson's budget label Rack-It, and is well worth anyone's £2.99.

Andy Smith

Brain-stretching block bash



The tank discovers a tricky problem on level two: the block formation it's facing requires more thought than at first meets the eye.



Being pursued by level five's special guardian, don't get caught in a dead end and remember it will follow your EXACT course.

RELEASE BOX

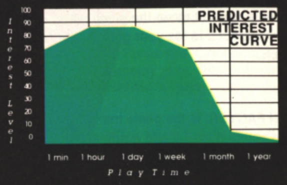
C64/128	£2.99 cs	REVIEWED
Spectrum	£2.99 cs	OCT 87

VISUAL EFFECTS ■■■■■■▨▨
Eye catching use of colour

AUDIO ■■■■■■▨▨
Weird and often subtle sound effects

IQ FACTOR ■■■■■■▨▨
As much thinking as zapping required

FUN FACTOR ■■■■■■▨▨
Very absorbing and instantly gripping



Instant addiction – but a month should see it finished

ACE RATING 815

ICE
INFANTILE COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT

HOW TO BE A COMPLETE BASTARD

Virgin's illegitimate arcade romp

SEXY Ade Edmondson (as he likes to call himself) plays lead sprite in this Spectrum version of the game based on his book of the same name. With tips from the great man himself your mission is to invade a Yuppie party and ensure your place in the Bastard Hall of Fame by ruining the party and upsetting the guests so much that they all leave.

With each yuppie that leaves the party, a letter from the words 'COMPLETE BASTARD' displayed across the bottom of the screen lights up permanently. If you only mildly upset a yuppie then the letter only lights up for a while. The object is to get your new-found status up in lights and achieve complete bastardom.

Lots of things can upset a yuppie. Ice cubes in a lady's underwear, for a start – that will upset her for a while, but not enough to make her leave a party – whereas making custard pies and splattering her dress with them would have her out the door in no time and so permanently light one of the letters. The men aren't all that keen on having perfume sprayed on them either, which might give you the idea that this game is ever so slightly sexist. You'd probably be right.

In addition to lighting up the letters you've also got to score as many bastard points as possible by doing generally obnoxious things like farting in front of people or drinking washing-up liquid. Four meters displayed around the screen measure such things as your drunkeness - which increases as you drink more of the 'Monster Get Pissed Fast lager'- and a 'weeometer' which also increases as you drink various liquids found around the house.

As you wander around, the horizontally-split screen gives you two seperate views of the same location and both these views can be rotated independently, enabling you to see everything in any location. This is very confusing to start with but, after a little perseverance, it becomes a lot easier to handle and eventually adds to the game.

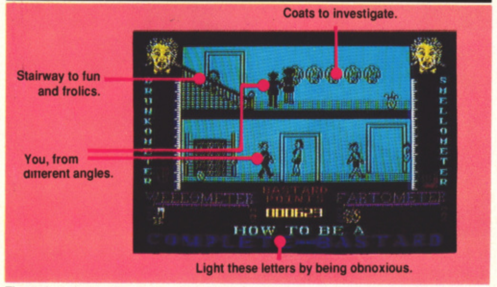
Controlling your character is done via a menu that appears in the bottom window whenever you press the fire button. Different options become available depending upon your location within the house or the room.

The graphics are nicely detailed and the animation is smooth, though it's a shame you never get to watch any of the bastardly deeds that you've commanded your character to do - merely a text description of what the consequences of your actions were. Sound is limited to a jolly title tune and the odd effect (farty noises etc.)

Being a complete bastard is a lot of fun and requires quite a bit of puzzling. The idea's original (although the game format isn't) and the gameplay improves with familiarity. All in all a far superior product to the Young Ones game that was released some while ago.

Andy Smith

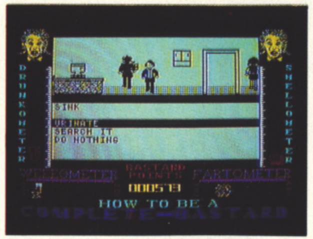
A bastard's gotta do...



The trainee bastard's gatecrashed the yuppie party and "bastavision" gives you the chance to view the action from all possible angles. I wonder what could be lurking in the pockets of those coats?

A naughty novel scenario.

Bastards come in all shapes and sizes but rarely to your computer screen (despite what you might call those aliens who manage to rob you of a high score) which makes what could could have been an average arcade adventure a lot more interesting and enjoyable to play. It's a pity, though, that you don't actually SEE yourself performing bastardly actions. This trick of substituting text messages for on-screen action (as in *Dan Dare*, for example) is all very well but when are we going to see some real action?



In the bathroom, where a trainee bastard can find lots of uses for a sink. The menu is your way of controlling the character's actions, but unfortunately you only get a text response to your requests.

RELEASE BOX

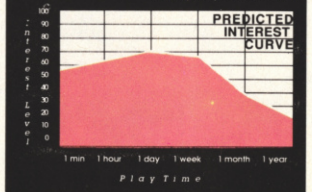
Spectrum	£7.95cs	REVIEWED
Amstrad	£8.95cs	REVIEWED
C64/128	£9.95cs	IMMINENT

VISUAL EFFECTS ■■■■▨▨▨
Detailed and well animated

AUDIO ■■■■▨▨▨
Good title tune but otherwise spot fx only

IQ FACTOR ■■■■▨▨▨
Some puzzling over what to do with the objects

FUN FACTOR ■■■■■▨▨
A witty romp – while it lasts

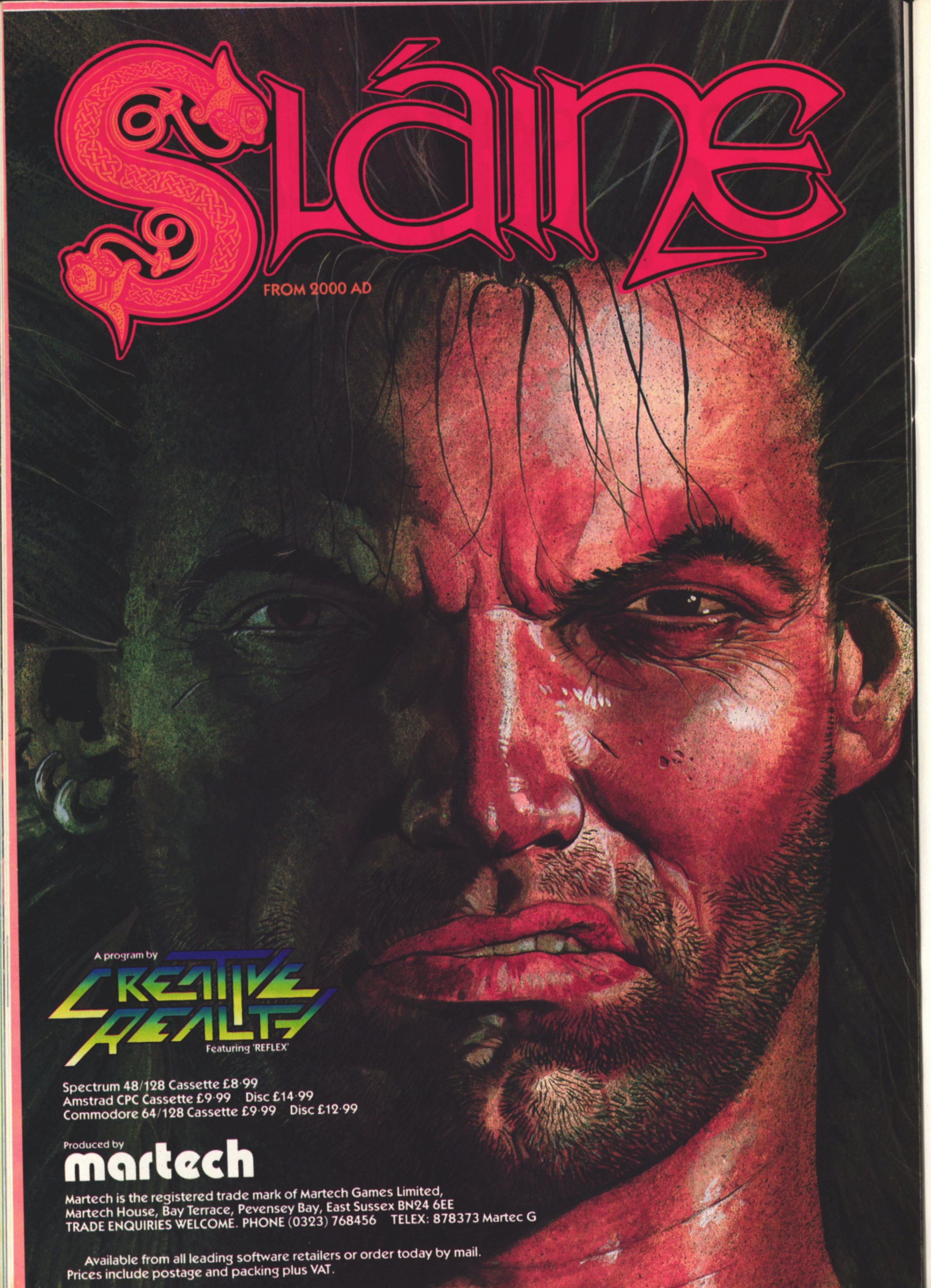


Perseverance breeds lasting interest

ACE RATING 792

Amstrad version

Every bit as playable as the Spectrum version reviewed here, with the same control method and game concept. More colourful graphics are of a slightly higher standard but, that apart, it's very similar and certainly as much fun.



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CHAMPIONSHIP WATER-SKIING

Sunny ski-ing simulation from **Infogrames.**

BY the time you read this we should know if Patrice Martin, 23-year-old World Champion water-skier, has retained his title; the championships were held in London, from the 17th to 20th of September. Infogrames' program gives you the chance to take Patrice's part in the three major water-skiing events; slalom, jump and freestyle.

Slalom is the first, and hardest, of the events. Towed behind a speedboat you have to weave around the buoys to left and right. To begin with it's remarkably frustrating; the frequency with which you fall over makes you suspect that the event is just impossible. However, perserverance brings you the knowledge that the key to the event is lengthening or shortening the tow-rope, and that the key to doing this is all in the timing. Frustrating though the slalom is, it does have a reasonable amount of lasting interest.

Freestyle means doing as many tricks as you can in the 20 second run. Using joystick or keys you can do spins and steps. Again, the problem is staying upright and – again – the solution lies in the timing.

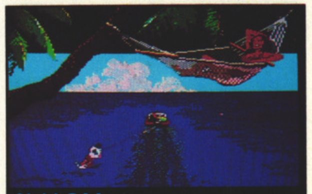
The jump is the most spectacular event and the one you're most likely to get instant results from. You pick up speed and try to hit the take-off board at the right moment; then maintain a good posture in the air and the chances are you'll go far, young man. A good jump should be in excess of 60 metres.

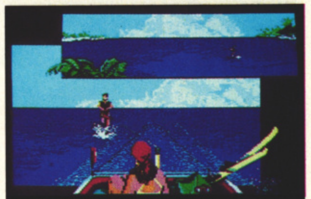
RELEASE BOX

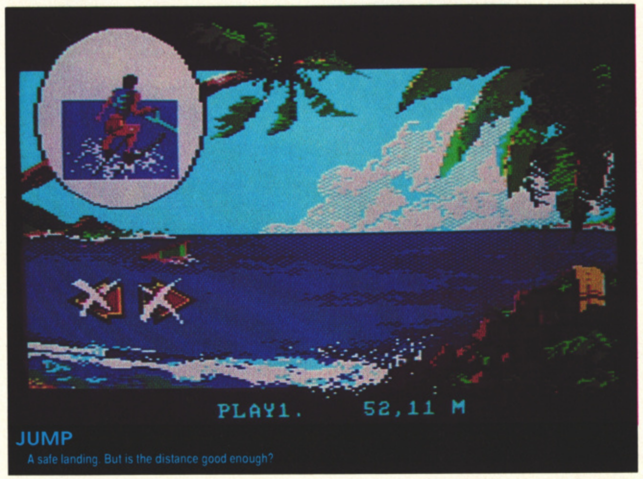
Amstrad	£9.95 cs £14.95 dk REVIEWED
C64/128	£9.95 cs £14.95 dk OCTOBER
Atari ST	£19.95 dk OCTOBER

The program looks the business, with beautifully blue seas, luxuriant palm trees and a presumably French beach beauty – Patrice's cherie? – indolently reclining in a hammock. The gameplay, though, rapidly palls; only the slalom poses any lasting challenge. Once you've acquired the skills to get on the high score table your only goal is to topple a certain Neptun from his perch on the top.

Peter Connor


SLALOM
Fifi lounges in the hammock while you try to get round those buoys


FREESTYLE
Split screen shows you trying your tricks, towed by Fifi (out of the hammock at last)



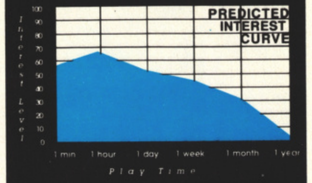
JUMP
A safe landing. But is the distance good enough?

VISUAL EFFECTS ■■■■■▨▨
Blue seas, palm trees, beautiful women...Nice

AUDIO ■■■▨▨▨▨
Nice tune but not much else

IQ FACTOR ■■▨▨▨▨▨
Not intellectually demanding

FUN FACTOR ■■■■▨▨▨
Slalom's tricky – but with the others, just dive in



Never obsesses you and won't really last

ACE RATING 692

MOEBIUS

Role-playing high-kicking quest from **ORIGIN SYSTEMS**

KAIMEN has stolen the Orb of Harmony from your master Moebius the Windwalker and you must travel the four elemental realms in search of this all-powerful object that binds the very forces of nature together. Fail and Kaimen will use the orb to do unspeakably horrible things to your fellow citizens of Khantun.

You start the game with an initial training period and your character's two main attributes of BODY and MIND are defined by how well you perform in a series of combats and in divination. Combat is of the usual martial arts variety but with a spot of sword-play thrown in for good measure. Divination is simply a quick reaction test in which you must stop a Yin-Yang symbol from moving out of a small square.

The quest itself begins outside the house of Moebius, where you start off with a limited supply of food and water. The screen displays a map-like section of the first of the four Realms (EARTH) with your devilishly attractive visage in the centre. Movement in any one of eight directions causes the screen to scroll around you revealing new territory.

The land is composed of large character blocks over which you (and any other people you may meet) move one block at a time. Most of the realm is covered with forest and in order to travel through this you must chop a path with your sword. You will also encounter barriers of rock which you need a hammer to break though. Such features make movement very frustrating and, combined with the rapidity with which your food and water run out, can reduce the thrill of exploration to a tiresome ordeal.

On your way you'll encounter peasants, guards, assassins and other oriental types. Communication with them is limited either to combat or to commands like STAY HERE and FOLLOW ME but there is also a HELP command which can induce other characters to reveal plots and sub-quests within the game.

You must also cleanse the temples of Moebius of the influence of the evil monks. Do this for all the temples in a single realm and Moebius will transport you to the next. Monks are tough and not only will they use magic against you but they are also VERY skilled fighters, so before tackling one be sure you energy and strength status (see screenshot) is up to it.

You start the game with a fireball spell and by practising prayer, meditation and fasting (often a dangerous business) you can increase your magical powers. Invisibility, teleportation and other spells will make life a lot easier.

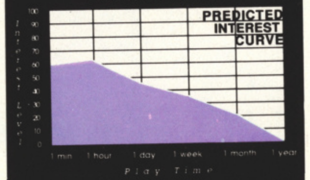
Complete the quest and a life of relaxation in the house of Moebius will be yours. But you'll need luck and a lot of patience (mostly with the C64 disk drive - the game is on two disks) to earn it. The idea of combining martial arts action with role playing could make for an excellent game but *Moebius*, sadly, is more of an old boot than a new kick-em-up. **Dave Packer**

VISUAL EFFECTS ■■■▨▨▨▨
Functional but unimpressive

AUDIO ■■▨▨▨▨▨
Very little sound

IQ FACTOR ■■■■▨▨▨
Keeps the brain ticking over

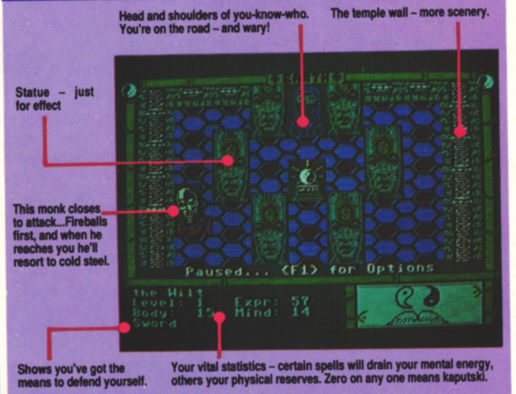
FUN FACTOR ■■▨▨▨▨▨
Not easy to get into and often frustrating



Frequent deaths and slow gameplay dampen enthusiasm

ACE RATING 628

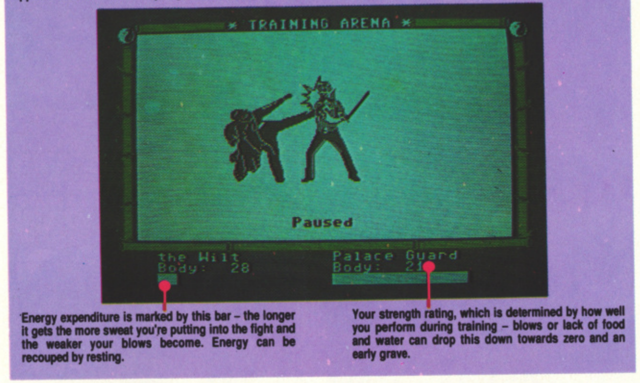
While exploring the disciple discovers an evil monk in the temple of Moebius. Watch your step. these guys are mean. skillful fighters who can also cast spells against you. Just plunge on in with fists flying and hope for the best.


Head and shoulders of you-know-who. You're on the road – and wary!
The temple wall – more scenery.
Statue – just for effect
This monk closes to attack...Fireballs first, and when he reaches you he'll resort to cold steel.
Shows you've got the means to defend yourself.
Your vital statistics – certain spells will drain your mental energy, others your physical reserves. Zero on any one means kaputski.

```
Paused... <F1> for Options
the Wilt
Level: 1     Expr: 57
Body:  15    Mind: 14
Sword
```

Deadly encounters in Khantun.

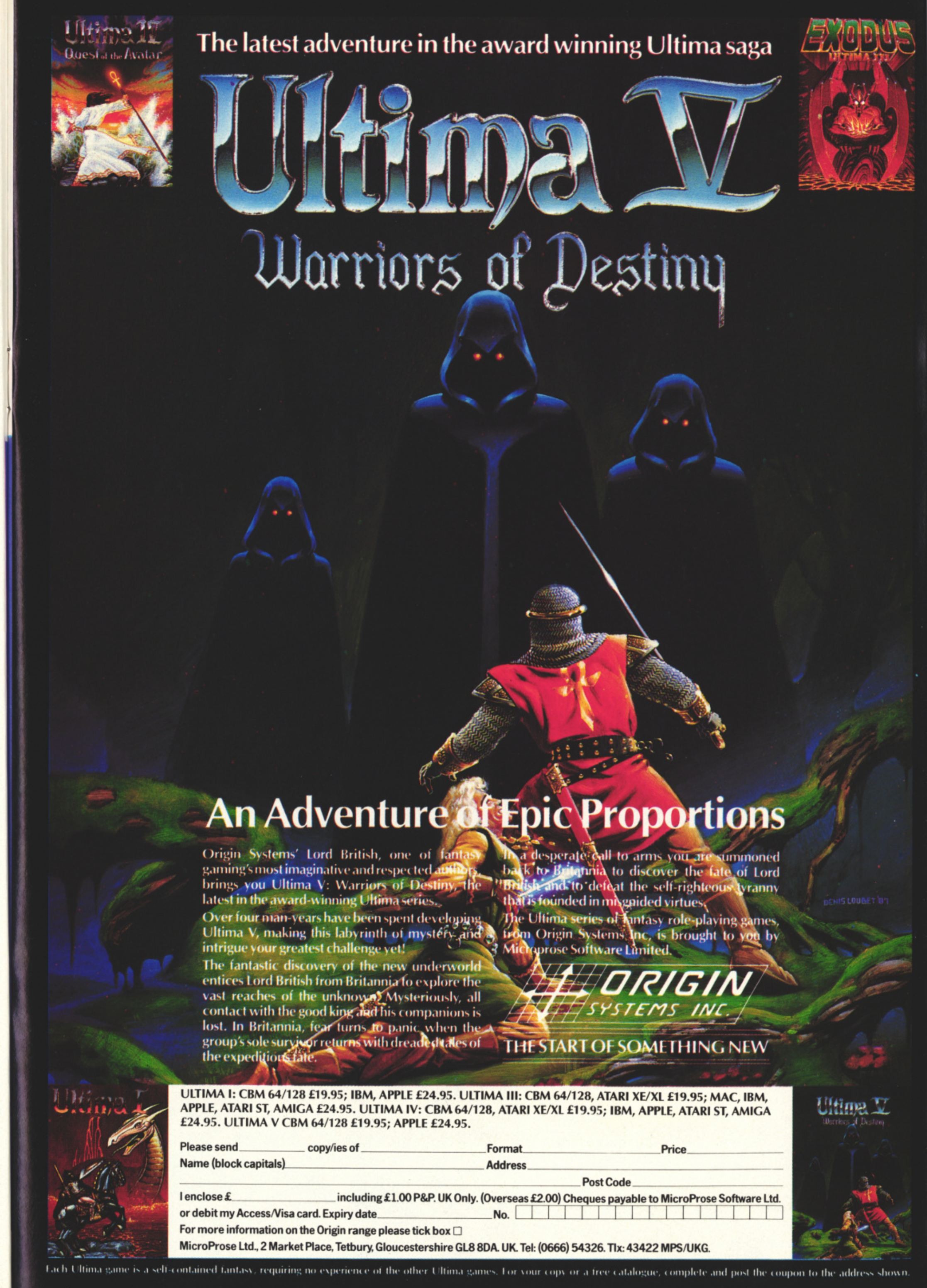
The robed disciple fights the palace guard during training. In this phase you have to use bare hands and feet against your opponent's sword – later on you get a sword of your own. There will be many more combats like this to come.


Energy expenditure is marked by this bar – the longer it gets the more sweat you're putting into the fight and the weaker your blows become. Energy can be recouped by resting.
Your strength rating, which is determined by how well you perform during training – blows or lack of food and water can drop this down towards zero and an early grave.

```
* TRAINING ARENA *
Paused
the Wilt         Palace Guard
Body:   28       Body:   21
```

RELEASE BOX

C64/128	£19.99dk	REVIEWED
Atari ST	£24.99dk	LATE OCT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ACE
910
RATED

RED L.E.D.

A great little roll-around from **REAKTOR.**

3D landscape *Marble Madness* clones take a new twist in Reaktor's latest offering *Red L.E.D.*

You start with a grid of interconnected hexagons, each of which represents a *Marble Madness*-style battle terrain. You select a hexagon and send your battle droid into the terrain to do battle with the resident aliens and collect four energy pods before making his escape. Complete a row, left to right across the screen, of these hexes and you've won the game (rather like a certain TV quiz show... 'Give me an A please, Bob!'). All this is done in a race against the clock. You have 60 minutes to complete your chosen series of terrains or it's curtains.

Red L.E.D. has 37 different landscapes or 'Warzones', each of which is large and extremely well-drawn with excellent use of colour making the 3D effect very convincing. These landscapes scroll very smoothly around your droid making this a real graphic treat and probably the best of its type.

As well as selecting different landscapes, you can also select one of three different droids, each with its own advantages and disadvantages. This is important because the main challenge of each Warzone varies from landscape to landscape and correct droid selection is essential to survival. Some levels are a maze of thin, twisting slopes and, as falling off of the landscape will cost you a minute off the clock, precise control is of upmost importance. The fanged and evilly-grinning Red L.E.D droid comes into his own here since he is by far the most controllable of the three and – most useful – can cling to a slope without slipping.

Sometimes a level is filled with acid lakes that will eat away your energy if touched. In this case you'll need the small saucer-shaped droid, more acid-resistant than the others though also the most difficult to control. Finally the bulb-shaped battle droid can withstand impacting aliens – so take him along if it's swarms of noxious nasties who will be giving the most trouble.

Aliens range from shapeless blobs to spray cans on wheels but all attack in the same way by rushing at you in a suicidal collision bid. Enemy droid generators are the source of all your attackers and these can be destroyed with multiple shots – but by the time you've found and destroyed them all there will probably be enough aliens around to keep you bblasting until you've either been killed or run out of time.

Exploration will reveal more than just energy pods, enemy droids and generators – there are ice switches which will freeze the acid lakes for a short time making them safe to cross; smartbombs (to clear the whole screen) to be collected; enemy droid freezers; and rotating time cylinders that can grant extra time – or take it away if rotating in the wrong direction.

Teleport pads are another interesting feature of this game – there are usually a number of these distributed around each level and they are often the only way of reaching otherwise inaccessible locations.

All these features combined with a 'view level' map option make this game stand head and shoulders above the opposition. Challenging, at times frustrating (particularly when you're trying to remember which landscape requires which droid), but hugely addictive.

Dave Packer

VISUAL EFFECTS ■■■■■■□

Probably the best graphics for this type of game

AUDIO ■■■□□□□

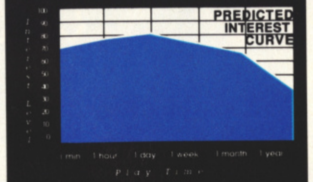
No music but good spot effects

IQ FACTOR ■■■□□□□

Once you've mastered the choice of droid it's all zap

FUN FACTOR ■■■■■□□

Easy to get into – you'll spend a long time getting out



Graphics and gameplay combine for lasting interest

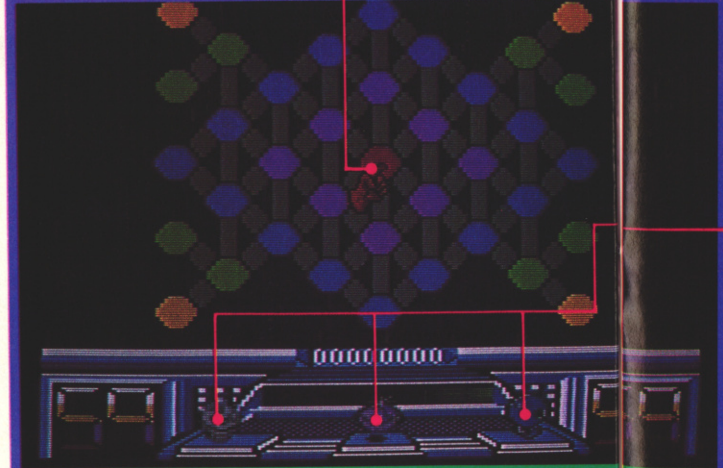
ACE RATING 910

RELEASE BOX		
C64/128	£9.99 cs £12.99 dk	REVIEWED
Amstrad	£9.99 cs £14.99 dk	IMMINENT
Spectrum	£8.99 cs	IMMINENT

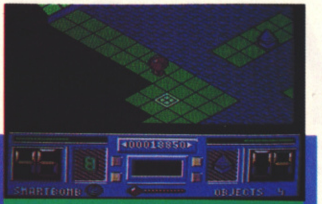
Where does the marble go now

Run'n'roll type games have loomed large on the shelves since *Marble Madness*. *Red L.E.D.* is the first to vary the basic recipe by giving your 'marble' alien-blasting potential. There have been similar variations on other popular themes – *Moebius* adding role-play to kung-fu, *Ranarama* putting magic into *Gauntlet*. How about a marble with jumping, flying, and spell-casting abilities – that should really go places! Let's have your suggestions and maybe the software houses will follow suit.

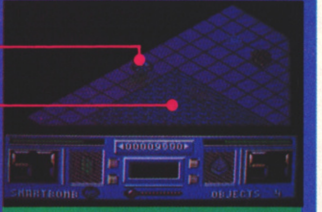
Beat the battle zones to beat that grid.



The grid and droids. Selecting a hexagon sends you off into one of Red L.E.D.'s 37 warzones – complete a line across the grid cracking each warzone in turn and win the game. Use careful hex selection, however, since some of these zones are more difficult than others and taking a long route across the grid may be your best policy. Be careful too with your droid selection for each expedition...

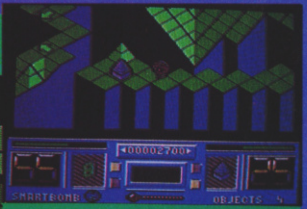


Another landscape and another problem. Bulb-head finds an energy pod but crossing that acid lake could prove fatal. Finding an ice switch is his only solution but will he manage to get back here before the ice melts again?

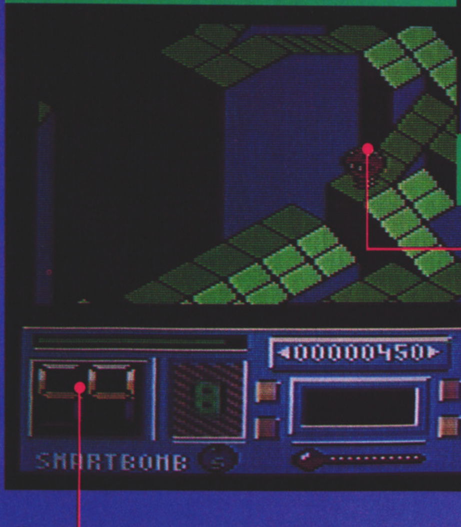


The saucer-shaped droid is ideal for coping with acid lakes. Here he discovers an ice switch and a droid generator – will he freeze the lake to make his escape from the swarming hordes of nasties, or will he stand his ground and blast the generator?

Red L.E.D. looking for the energy pods. On this nasty twisting landscape any other droid would be useless – but with Red's sticking power you have a good chance of success.



Red L.E.D. finds an energy pod and the level exit. Only three more pods to find before he can leap to safety – but finding your way back to the exit again is not so easy.



CHUCK YEAGER'S
ADVANCED FLIGHT TRAINER

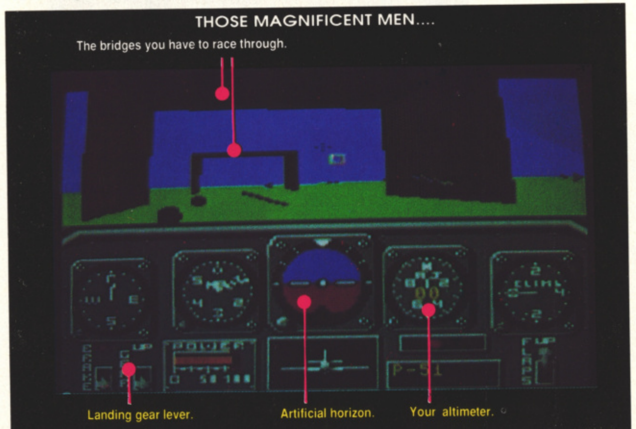
ACE 912 RATED

ELECTRONIC ARTS (and Chuck) want to get you airborne

CHUCK Yeager, the first man to break the sound barrier in an aeroplane, has lent his name to this latest release from the Electronic Arts stable. Broadly speaking it's a very enjoyable flight simulator – but that's by no means the whole story.

The game is split into four sections; you can choose to either test fly new planes or have a bash at formation flying and aeroplane racing. You'd probably be better off, though, starting with the flight instruction, which teaches you how to achieve complex moves such as aileron rolls and loops.

THOSE MAGNIFICENT MEN....



Racing another plane involves flying through several bridges, and completing one of the many courses before your rival.

Menu Mania

The game options are controlled by means of pull down menus that can be called up at any time. For example, if you're flying in basic training mode you can opt to execute left or right turns, landings and take offs by hitting the Commodore Key; a menu appears with the options, allowing you to choose between a training session or an attempt at doing the manoeuvre solo. The instruction mode is so simple to use that it doesn't take long before even a ham fisted pilot feels confident enough to try some of the more complex moves.

The teaching method is simple but effective. Your screen is horizontally split with the top half as your cockpit view of the surrounding countryside and the bottom half filled with all your necessary flight instruments. In the centre of the top of the screen is a small cross; around this is a small yellow square, which is your means of controlling your plane. The farther away from the cross the square is then the severer the turn, dive or climb will be.

RELEASE BOX

C64/128	£9.95 cs £16.95dk	REVIEWED
IBM PC	£24.95dk	REVIEWED

No other versions planned

When you're in training mode a larger brown square is also visible, moving around of its own accord. You follow this brown square with your yellow square and so execute the move. Getting to know the moves is essential when it comes for you to fly the plane unaided. Crash your plane and the digitised picture of good ol'Chuck appears mouthing such encouraging precepts as "you're no friend of mine!".

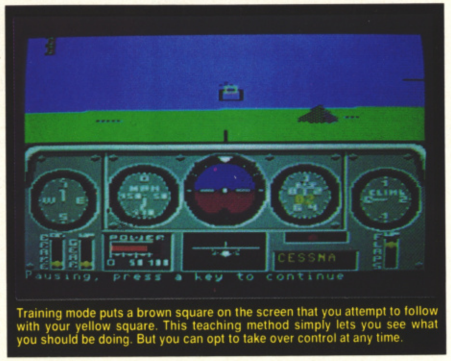
IBM PC Version

Despite the fact that it only has four colours, the IBM PC version is very similar to the C64 version – but it does have a few enhancements. If you're stunt flying you have the option to perform several stunts in succession and watch your achievements played back to you. As much fun and involvement on the PC as on the C64.

The graphics are stunning; by pressing the appropriate key any one of ten views can be displayed, including a view of your plane as seen from the control tower. All ground features and other planes are seen in filled 3D. Sound is limited to the drone of your engine or the whirr of your propeller, depending on which particular plane you happen to be flying.

Chuck Yeager is entertainingly different from yer standard flight sim; the training element means that it's nowhere near as difficult to get off the ground. Once you've earned your wings, though, you can go solo and experience a much higher level of difficulty. There is so much in this game that it will take many hours of instructive fun to experience and master all the available options.

Andy Smith



Pausing, press a key to continue

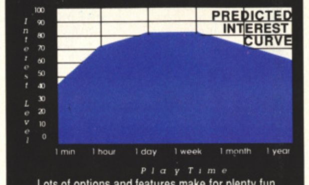
Training mode puts a brown square on the screen that you attempt to follow with your yellow square. This teaching method simply lets you see what you should be doing. But you can opt to take over control at any time.

VISUAL EFFECTS ■■■■■▨▨
Filled 3D and good perspective

AUDIO ■■■▨▨▨▨
Throbbing engine noises

IQ FACTOR ■■■■■▨▨
Lots of learning before you get the right stuff

FUN FACTOR ■■■■■▨▨
Once you're aloft the game reveals its quality



Lots of options and features make for plenty fun

ACE RATING 912

SUPER SPRINT

ACE 907 RATED

ELECTRIC DREAMS' new race-em-up

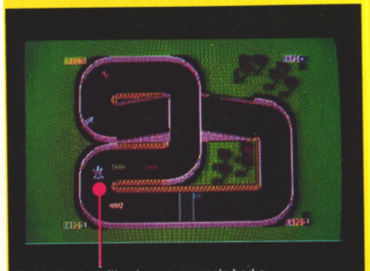
COIN-OP racing games are all the rage at the moment, but this one could even put *Out Run* in the shade. With its distinctive overhead view, car tuning options and multiple drones, *Super Sprint* has been a huge arcade hit; so how does the micro version shape up?

The most striking feature of the coin-op is the way up to four people can play at once – and sadly there's no way that can carry across to a Spectrum. Electric Dreams have only been able to fit single and two-player modes in, with 'drones' – computer-controlled cars – making up the numbers.

RELEASE BOX

Spectrum	£9.99cs	REVIEWED
C64/128	£9.99cs £14.99 dk	IMMINENT
Atari ST		IMMINENT

Each time you play you can select any one of the game's eight tracks to start on. The default track is the easiest by some way. Viewed from above it looks very simple indeed; a few bends, good long straights and a starting grid *cum* finishing line. Actually getting round this is anything but simple, and it'll be a few races before you've got the hang of driving your car at all.

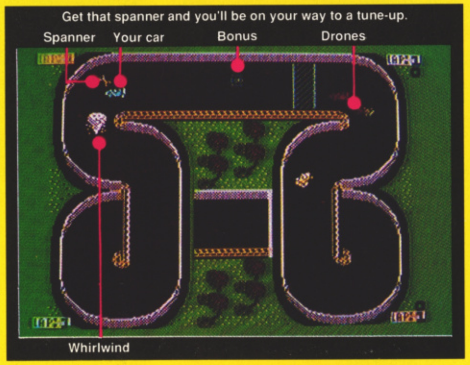


The helicopter flies in – someone's had a nasty accident.

It's not that there's a whole load of controls to wrestle with. In fact you've only got left, right and accelerate, but using them correctly means lots of practice. Take a corner too late, early or fast and you'll crash into the barrier around the track.

Hit the barrier a glancing blow and you'll bounce off again, but the more normal failed cornering attempt will leave you well and truly stuck, wheels spinning. To get back in the race you must release the accelerator, turn your car to face directly out onto the track and then pull away. Even if you manage this your car's liable to swerve as you come 'unstuck', sending you straight into the barrier opposite if you aren't very careful.

Get that spanner and you'll be on your way to a tune-up.



The drones don't drive any too fast on the easier tracks, but they never crash. They also don't seem to be affected by oil patches (which send you skidding) or the game's roving whirlwinds (which will leave you in a spin). Their reliable – if humdrum – driving is quite enough to beat you hollow if you keep crashing, so good cornering and crash recovery techniques are essential. If you beat them all over four laps, they'll get meaner on the next race – and since that's on a new track, you've got some learning to do.

You do have one trick up your sleeve though, and that's tuning. As well as oil slicks, whirlwinds and 100 point bonuses, you'll often come across little yellow spanners on the track. Collect three of these and you'll get a chance to tune your car before the next race. In any one session you can boost your traction (roadholding), acceleration or top speed.

Chicanes, underpasses and gaps all add to *Super Sprint*'s considerable visual appeal, and spice up the gameplay too. The rescue helicopter is also nicely done – though it only shows up after very bad crashes on the Spectrum version – and the trackside scenery looks good.

But there's a big visual problem on the Spectrum – attribute clash. When the cars are bunched up together their colours inevitably merge, and it can be very tough to spot your own vehicle. To make matters worse, *Super Sprint* cars never collide with each other so it's quite possible for two of them to occupy the same space!

Confusing stuff then, and very frustrating at times too. What pulls the game through so well is its remarkably addictive gameplay, the challenge of new tracks and the excitement of tuning your car to perfection.

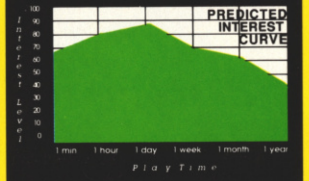
Andy Wilton

VISUAL EFFECTS ■■■■■■▨
Nice track, shame about the clashes

AUDIO ■▨▨▨▨▨▨
Weak engine noises

IQ FACTOR ■▨▨▨▨▨▨
Not very cerebral stuff

FUN FACTOR ■■▨▨▨▨▨
Very playable – but not instantly



Frustration soon gives way to addiction

ACE RATING 907

ACE 2

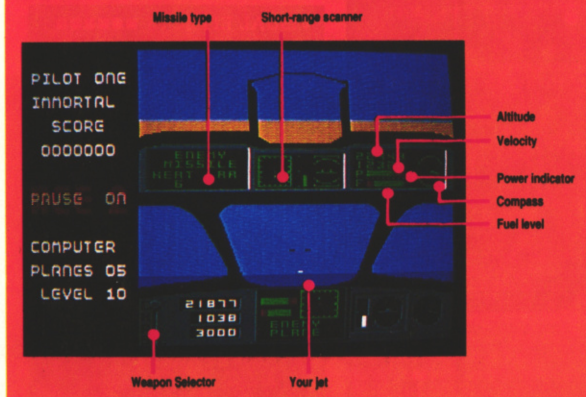
Aerobatic combat from **CASCADE**

FOLLOWING the success of their earlier flight simulator *ACE* (for Air Combat Emulator), Cascade Games have released the sequel - *ACE 2* - which sets out to give you more arcade action than simulation in the cockpit of an advanced jet fighter.

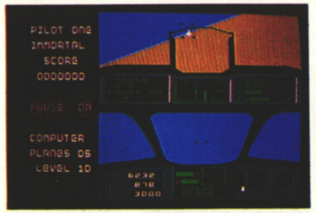
This time, however, you're not alone. In *ACE2* you must battle it out with either your C64 or a friend in one of two possible scenarios – dog fight or full-scale combat.

Dogfight means just that - you fly your jet and attempt to shoot down your opponent before he shoots you. Skill levels are incorporated by means of allowing the player to choose the number of jets each side has at their disposal - from 3 to 20 - so the more aircraft each side has, the longer the game will last. Additionally you can choose just how many missile hits each jet must receive before it comes down. If you're in one player mode you can also choose the computer's skill level (from 1 to 20) which may or may not help you win.

Bandit at 6 o'clock!



The split-screen view of the action in ACE2 puts your own cockpit view on top and your opponent's underneath. As you can see the ground detail is non-existent so there's not much to keep you entertained. You can see yourself showing up on the other screen as a small white dot near the bottom of the windscreen.



Now it's your turn to go onto the offensive. The enemy jet is in your sights and it's time to fire off a missile and guide it home.

Here and throughout the game the on-screen action is divided into two areas with each pilot having their own section, displaying all the necessary information about altitude, velocity and number of missiles etc. Armaments include an aerial cannon, heat-seeking air-to-air missiles, radar-guided air-to-air missiles and air-to-ground missiles.

'Full scale conflict' is rather a grand title for what is in effect only slightly different from the dogfight. You have one ground installation to destroy (depending upon which side you're on, this will be either a radar station or a spy ship). To help you, you have the use of air-to-ground missiles, which (like the radar-guided missiles) must be fired and guided to their target by keeping the object in your sights until the missile strikes home. Destroy the installation plus the remainder of the enemy's craft and you'll win the game.

You'll find no vector graphics in *ACE 2* because it's all filled, but frankly the scenery fails to impress and the severe lack of ground detail means you can spot the installations from several miles out. Sound, however, is a nice feature of the program with a lively title tune and some good effects within the game.

ACE 2 tries to combine the traditional flight simulator with a fair slice of action – but with the emphasis heavily on the action side. If you like your flight sims to have loads of details like rudder control, undercarriage control, flaps control and so on then you could well be disappointed. Unfortunately the action still doesn't live up to expectations – a limited cockpit view and only two (at most) opponents at any one time dampens the thrills you'd expect from a shoot-em up and fails to compensate for the absence of control options you'd get from a simulator.

Andy Smith

RELEASE BOX

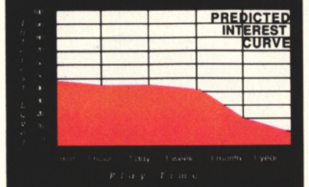
C64/128	£9.95 cs	£14.95 dk	REVIEWED
Spectrum 48K	£8.95 cs		IMMINENT
Spectrum 128K	£9.95 cs		IMMINENT
Atari ST		£19.95 dk	IMMINENT
Amstrad CPC			UNDECIDED

VISUAL EFFECTS ■■■□□□□
Below average – even for a flight simulator

AUDIO ■■■■□□□
Lively title tune and good spot effects

IQ FACTOR ■■■□□□□
Easy controls – nothing else to stretch the brain

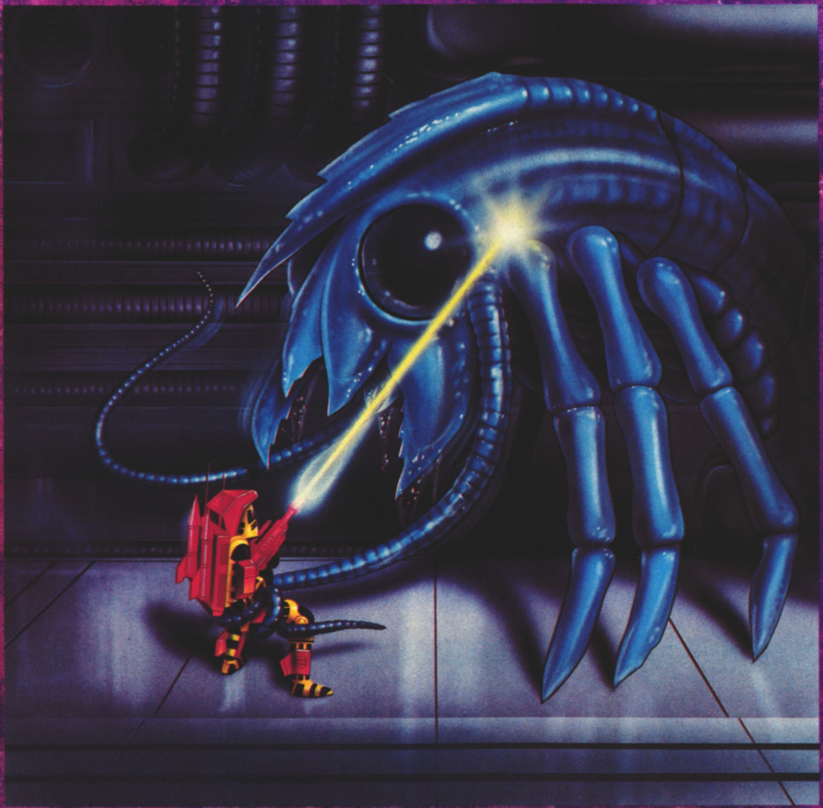
FUN FACTOR ■■□□□□□
Soon becomes tedious



Soon becomes dull and a bore to play

ACE RATING 590

SIDEWIZE



Sidewize...the ultimate shoot-em-up...incredible weapon pick-up systems...awe-inspiring arcade action..."Sidewize is the slickest, no-messing shootout in a long, long time" wrote Sinclair User...don't mess with the others, try messing with Sidewize.

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3D GALAX

Gremlin's Galaxians get the solid 3D treatment

GALAXIANS have plucked up courage to return to the screen, presumably because this time they have been granted solid 3D status.

In *3D Galax* the view from your cockpit reveals different formations of the four alien types swooping toward your ship, gloriously solid'n'shaded, in the hope of impacting and turning you into space dust. Your ship fires rotating cubes at the enemy, shattering them into fragments of debris – but you only get one shot at a time so be sure of your aim before pressing the button.

RELEASE BOX
Atari ST £19.95dk REVIEWED
No other versions planned

At the start of each wave a new fleet of invaders floats down from above to hover menacingly in front of your ship, swaying gently from side to side in the same manner as their two-dimensional coin-op ancestors. Then, row by row, they dive in for the kill with any surviving attackers returning to the back of the formation ready to strike again.

To complicate matters, after their initial posturing the aliens will swoop in from different altitudes, approaching from above and below. Pushing the joystick forward sends your ship diving through space, pulling back takes you into a climb. There's a small 'galactic map' at the bottom of the screen to show your position relative to any aliens.

Every four waves you have to navigate the asteroid field. This is undoubtedly one of the game's best graphic sequences with lots of beautifully shaded asteroids spinning rapidly toward your ship as you dodge your way through. You can use missiles to blast any that get too close – these projectiles are used only in the asteroid belt and resemble mini-meteors (distinctly un-missile like) but have the same effect as the cubes.

The aliens change their attack formation every four waves. There are 25 formations and in some you need to be very careful of ships passing by you, otherwise you can swiftly dodge past an alien only to crash into the one you didn't notice above it.

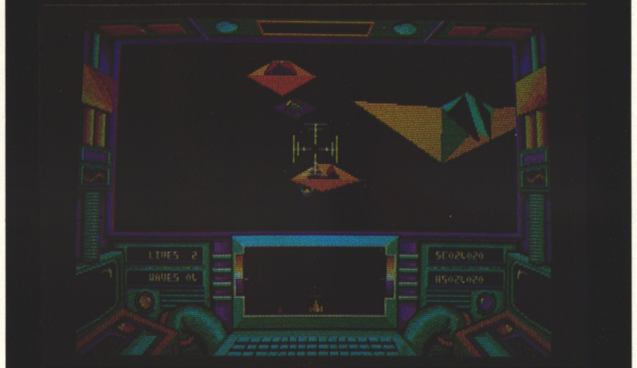
Attack in *3D Galax* is head-on only, so there's no shooting the enemy from the side or from behind like there is in *Elite*. This is limiting but doesn't spoil the 3D visual effect and is more in tune with the *Galaxian* theme. The game also scores well in the sound department with a catchy and very competent tune playing throughout. Another good touch is the desperate digitised scream of your pilot as the alien craft crash into you and you lose one of your three lives. You get an extra live every 10000 points – not too difficult to reach.

All these features SHOULD make *3D Galax* a very good game indeed but in practise it is sadly lacking in excitement. It's only after four waves that the enemy attack formation changes and even then it's still very much a case of more of the same. What's more, they never shoot back. Add to this the fact that when firing your cube appears to veer off-course when you move and things are looking grim indeed.

With a little more thought and a lot more action this could have been a winner. As it is, it doesn't look as if this latest onslaught of the Galaxian tribe is going to claim many victims.

Dave Packer

3D thrills?



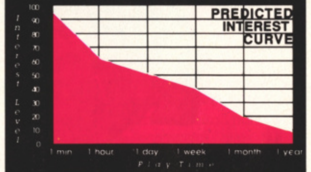
A near miss from a winged enemy. The scanner at the bottom of the screen shows the enemy's elevation and attack formation. Smooth animation and good perspective make these pics very eye-catching, but brilliant graphics don't necessarily make a brilliant game - a point that 3D Galax makes only too clearly.

VISUAL EFFECTS ■■■■■■■▒
Some extremely attractive 3D displays

AUDIO ■■■■■▒▒
Catchy tune and good FX

IQ FACTOR ■▒▒▒▒▒▒
All blast and no thought

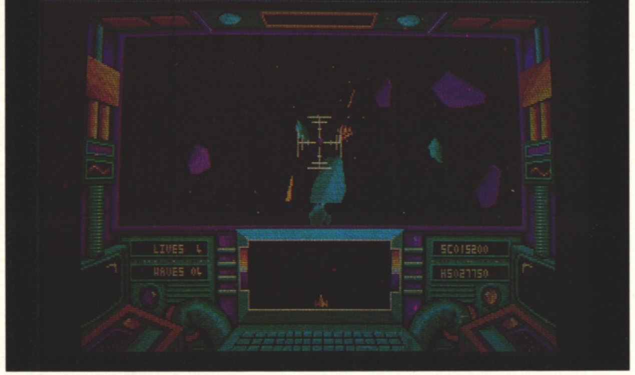
FUN FACTOR ■■▒▒▒▒▒
Not enough action or variety



The graphics grab you then the gameplay puts you off

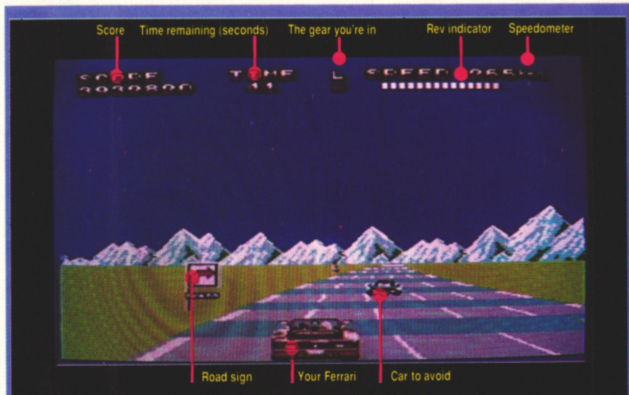
ACE RATING 692

Navigating the asteroid belt. Probably the best graphics yet as the shaded and spinning rocks drift toward your ship – but even this soon loses its appeal.



OUT RUN

SEGA serve up a red-hot racing coin-op conversion



A curve coming up and there's traffic ahead.

US Gold's home computer versions of this coin-op hit are still some way away, but you can get into the driving seat right now if you've got a Sega Master System.

In *Out Run* you take the wheel of an open-topped Ferrari in a race against the clock, weaving through the traffic along sweeping multi-lane highways. It's a risky business: hit other vehicles and you'll lose speed or go into a spin, but crash into one of the many roadside obstacles and your car will tumble end over end.

Release Box
Sega £24.95 cartridge REVIEWED
C64 and other versions US Gold DEC 87

From a viewpoint behind your car you have to steer left and right, change gear, accelerate and brake. To keep things simple your car only has two gears: low for speeds up to 170 kph or so, and high from there up to a maximum of just under 300 kph. To complicate matters you have to select gears by moving the joystick up or down. Logical enough you might think, but with the standard Sega controllers it's very easy to accidentally change gear while cornering.

There's a controller button each for accelerator and brake, though you won't find too much call for the latter. For the most part *Out Run* driving's a matter of keeping the accelerator hard down and screeching round the curves in top gear – when you aren't dodging the traffic, that is.

Since it's a road race, you're as likely to come across Volkswagen Beetles as Porsches. The difference is largely cosmetic, since all the other cars behave in pretty much the same way – sticking to their lanes for the most part, at a steady 180 or so.

On the game's occasional stretches of five-lane highway overtaking is fairly simple, but on the more common three-lane stuff things can get very tricky indeed. Sharp corners and S-bends are signposted in advance, and they need to be – at top speed you can skid two or three lanes quite easily – but a good road position isn't enough if there's other traffic in your way.

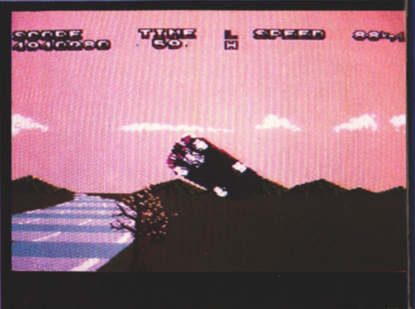
There's 20,000 points in it for you every time you overtake other cars but that's not the real importance of getting past them. *Out Run*'s a series of stages through different kinds of terrain, and there's a time check at the end of each one. The choice of route is yours – the game has five separate finishing lines, and junctions at the end of each stage offer many diferent routes to them – but whether you go for the long hard trans-desert slog or prefer the rolling, tree-lined twists and turns of Cloudy Mountain, you'll need every second you can get. Unused time carries over to the next stage, so you can't let up even on the easy stages.

Building up time means keeping your foot hard down, but it also means avoiding collisions. There are no lives to lose – you can hit other vehicles or plough off the road as often as you like – but the time you waste getting back up to speed can stop you reaching the next checkpoint.

When *Out Run*'s graphics are good, they are very good indeed. Your car is bright and well-drawn, and the sweeping curves of the road can be very impressive at high speed. But the console has problems coping with larger roadside features smoothly and *Space Harrier* style sprite problems aren't uncommon. The display can get confusing too: when the road rises it gets tricky just telling which direction the road is curving in!

Overall this *Out Run*'s no substitute for the coin-op, but it is very playable stuff. The variety of routes and tremendous feeling of speed easily outweigh the graphic rough edges.

Andy Wilton



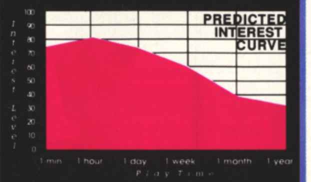
Hit a tree and your car's sent tumbling.

VISUAL EFFECTS ■■■■■▒▒
Very fast, but rough in parts

AUDIO ■■■■■▒▒
Choice of three tunes

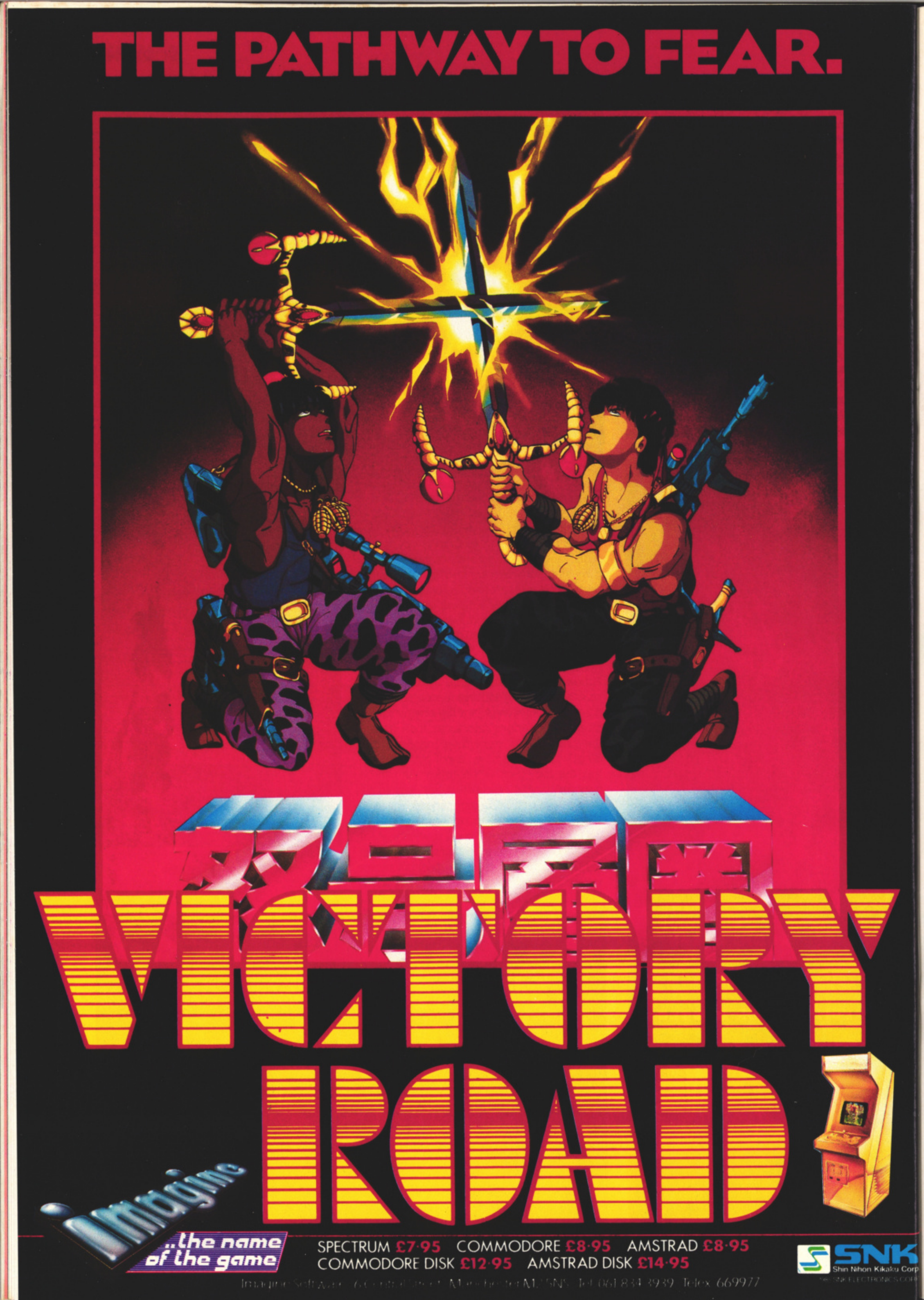
IQ FACTOR ■■▒▒▒▒▒
Only your route to plan

FUN FACTOR ■■■■■■▒
Instantly add ictive



Different routes make for lasting interest

ACE RATING 852



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PLEXAR

MASTERTRONIC (ADDED DIMENSION)

bounce you down the road to oblivion.

PLEXAR is the name of the planet on which this game is set, and the natives are round, bouncy, and extremely vulnerable.

As a perky young Plexarian you have been elected by your fellows to venture forth along the planet's crystal roads. These consist of a network of highways, connecting the various continents (which, incidentally, do not appear in the game) constructed by an ancient and now-defunct race of Miracle Engineers. The primitive Plexarians regard these highways with religious awe and annually elect one of their number to follow the yellow brick road to oblivion. This year it's your turn.

The object of the game is to travel all 16 connecting roads that span the planet, each of which is connected to the next by a 'warp-bridge' – effectively a stretch of landscape viewed from above. The gameplay on the roads themselves can be divided into two parts, the first of which has you bouncing along a continually scrolling highway in *Trailblazer* style. Initially you're given a choice of three roadways and you can choose which one you'd like to start on. You have a limited amount of energy and must travel the length of the road losing as little of this as possible.

The crystal roads in this phase are made up of different rectangles that affect you in various ways. Black squares suck energy whereas others will knock you sideways, bounce you forward two places (or backwards) and generally mess you about. In practice, however, you don't have much control over the ball in this section. The road scrolls inexorably towards you without much variation in the obstacles and all you can do is cope with the effects of the different squares as best you can. Gameplay isn't a strong point here, but luckily this part doesn't last long.

The second phase of highway hi-jinx gives you complete control over the ball's progress and the roadways are varied in both format and challenge. You may find yourself on a single-square-width highway or having to choose between two different roads that may lead to different obstacles, swapping from one to the other. You may also find yourself bouncing happily along for miles, only to find that you've reached a dead-end and must bounce all the way back. There's a time limit, so a lot of practice and road memory is essential here.

Again there are a number of different rectangles in this phase with varying properties. Some switch you from one roadway to another, others grab hold of you and whisk you from side to side, at which point you must choose at which point to bounce off carefully and quickly. Running out of road loses you one of five lives, as does running out of time (but with the added annoyance of sending you back to the beginning).

The 'warp-bridge' phase is viewed directly from above as you move over a landscape that scrolls from top to bottom, avoiding hazards ranging from black holes (bridged, but only for a moment at a time) to nasty flying objects overhead that deplete your energy on contact. Again you're up against the clock, and at various points you have to choose your route carefully as the wrong one could have you up a blind alley.

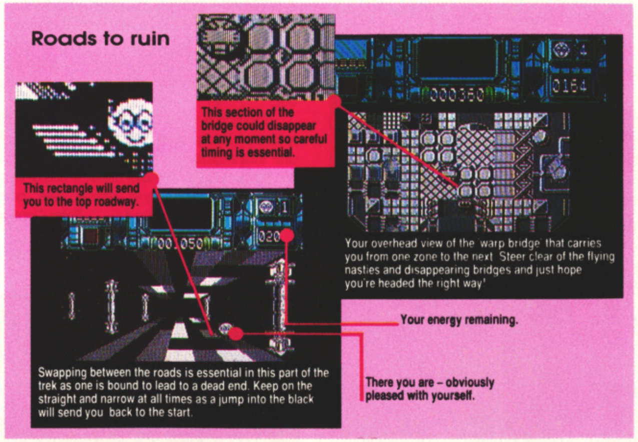
The graphics are good, though the rectangles tend to strain your eyes after a while and colour is used simply but effectively. The atmosphere of Plexar is obviously not suitable for sound transmission, other than the occasional blip, but this doesn't detract from the game. Gameplay is simple enough and it's easy to get involved, but a little luck and hard work are needed if you wish to do well. A thought-provoking gem that should provide quite a few hours of fun and frustration.

Andy Smith

RELEASE BOX

Spectrum	£2.99 cs	REVIEWED
C64/128 + other formats		UNDECIDED

Roads to ruin



This section of the bridge could disappear at any moment so careful timing is essential.

This rectangle will send you to the top roadway.

Your overhead view of the 'warp bridge' that carries you from one zone to the next. Steer clear of the flying nasties and disappearing bridges and just hope you're headed the right way!

Your energy remaining.

Swapping between the roads is essential in this part of the trek as one is bound to lead to a dead end. Keep on the straight and narrow at all times as a jump into the black will send you back to the start.

There you are – obviously pleased with yourself.

Balls on top

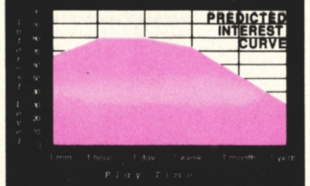
***Plexar* brings a new dimension to bouncing ball games with the addition of the overhead roadway – a real brain teaser since all the action on it is effectively upside down. Good hand-eye co-ordination are a must when the going gets tough, and the disorientation on the the overhead highway can trick you into jumping forward when you mean to jump back – a topsy-turvey experience that often ends in oblivion.**

VISUAL EFFECTS ■■■■■■▨▨
Scrolling is smooth and everything is well-drawn

AUDIO ■■■▨▨▨▨▨
Effects are short and sweet

IQ FACTOR ■■■■■■▨▨
You'll have to have your brain in gear most of the way

FUN FACTOR ■■■■■■▨▨
Entertaining frustration



Getting to know the roads keeps the interest level high

ACE RATING 887

ACE 919 RATED

SKULLDIGGERY

Beefy *Boulderdash* clone, courtesy of **NEXUS.**

CLONES are all the rage these days, especially clones of already classic games. *Skulldiggery* weighs in as a heavy duty *Boulderdash* clone and one that – on the ST – has evolved far beyond its original. You get 100 different puzzle screens to keep you hooked in the most infuriating way as you dig for diamonds in the danger-fraught underground.

You control a 'rotund cave mite' who likes nothing better than gobbling up diamonds. In order to leave a cavern you have to eat the required number of diamonds within a time limit – on certain screens time is very tight indeed. Of course it's not just as simple as gobbling away like crazy; the caverns include numerous hazards and a multitude of puzzles.

Skulls are the most widespread problem. They are basically what in a certain other game would have been boulders; take care they don't drop on you. As you progress in the game and the screens become more complicated, skulls also have to be pushed around to smash walls and destroy various nasties.

Crystal Bats and Crazy Ghosts are the principal opponents. The latter are Pac-Man-like critturs who congregate in large numbers within their compounds. Since they release clusters of sparkling diamonds when they explode they are often the key to solving a screen. Crazy Bats move like lightning through tunnels; they too explode when hit by other objects and are a useful means of breaking through walls to get at the diamonds within.

Skulldiggery starts off with some very gentle screens to get you going. Very quickly, though, the puzzles get tougher and your reflexes and grey matter are called upon to give everything they've got. You can also elect to start your game at any one of five different screens up to 26. Even when you've cracked a problem there's no guarantee you'll solve the screen every time you play it; there's always the danger of a false move and death by a falling skull or diamond, while the sands of time are always running out.

The game may well be a shameless imitation of *Boulderdash* – but it's an excellent one that's extremely addictive and won't be solved in a hurry. What's more, it has a very entertaining two-player option (see box) which really adds to the fun. **Peter Connor**

the Ratings

VISUAL EFFECTS ■■■■□□□

Good design and colour – looks good on mono too

AUDIO ■■■■■□□

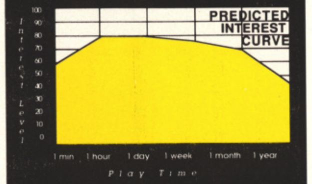
Good effects and you can swap to a nice tune

IQ FACTOR ■■■■■■□

Very puzzling in places

FUN FACTOR ■■■■■■□

Instantly playable with long-term addictive power



Obsessive – you'll still be playing in a year's time

ACE RATING 919

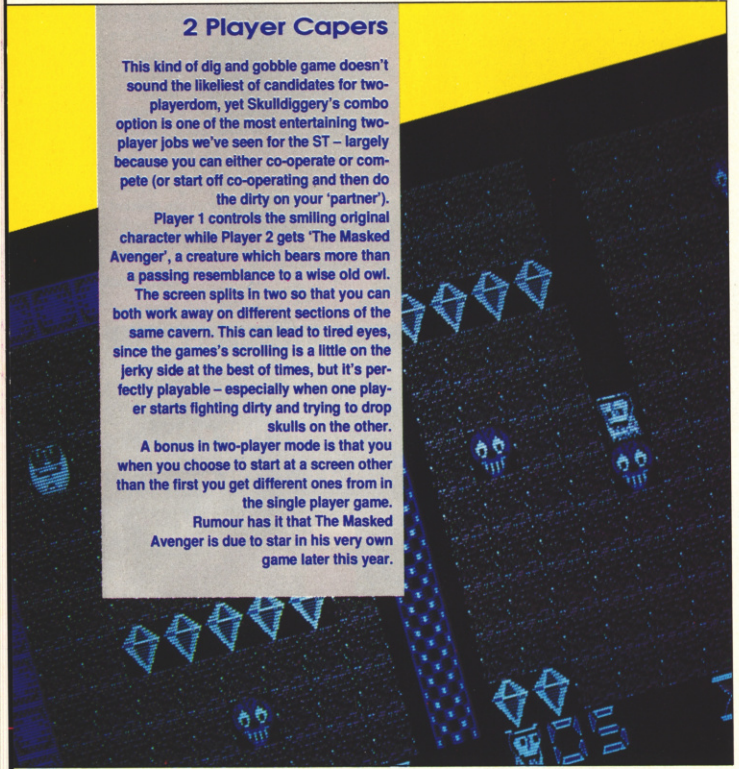
2 Player Capers

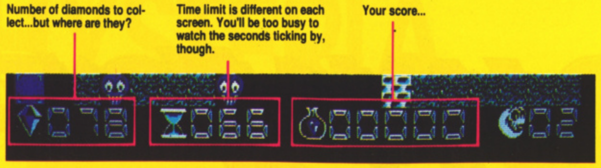
This kind of dig and gobble game doesn't sound the likeliest of candidates for two-playerdom, yet Skulldiggery's combo option is one of the most entertaining two-player jobs we've seen for the ST – largely because you can either co-operate or compete (or start off co-operating and then do the dirty on your 'partner').

Player 1 controls the smiling original character while Player 2 gets 'The Masked Avenger', a creature which bears more than a passing resemblance to a wise old owl. The screen splits in two so that you can both work away on different sections of the same cavern. This can lead to tired eyes, since the games's scrolling is a little on the jerky side at the best of times, but it's perfectly playable – especially when one player starts fighting dirty and trying to drop skulls on the other.

A bonus in two-player mode is that you when you choose to start at a screen other than the first you get different ones from in the single player game.

Rumour has it that The Masked Avenger is due to star in his very own game later this year.

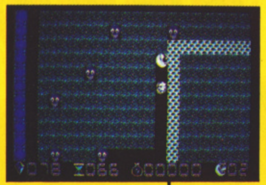



Number of diamonds to collect...but where are they?
Time limit is different on each screen. You'll be too busy to watch the seconds ticking by, though.
Your score...

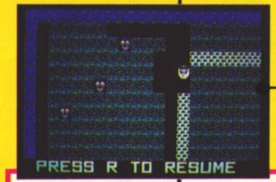
HOW TO DO IT...

SCREEN 16 FEED THE WEED

That weed's completely inaccessible and you need to get the ghosts to it to turn it into diamonds. You've got to collect 78 of them and there isn't much time.

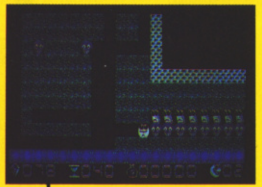


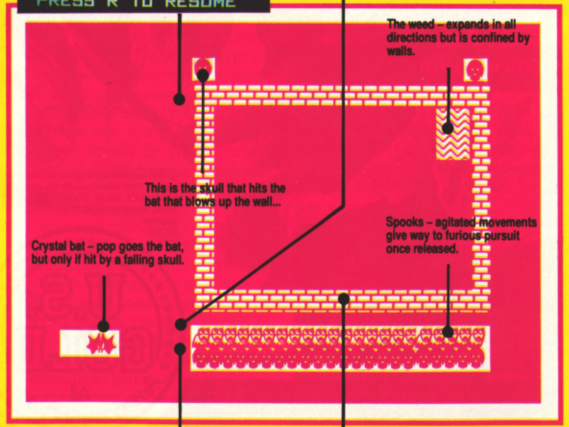
1. The busy little bat is the key to cracking open those walls; release him and then high-tail it up towards the skull. Once you're past the skull do a sharp left and it will fall, crush the bat, the bat will explode, the walls will open and...

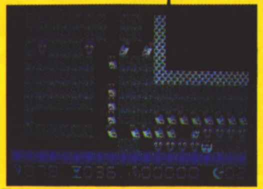


2...in you go to dig away the earth so that the ghosts can rub shoulders with the expanding weed.

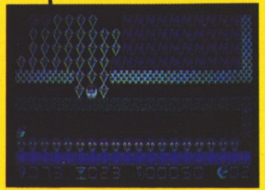
3. Now release those nasty but precious ghosts. Move down next to the skull...




The weed – expands in all directions but is confined by walls.
This is the skull that hits the bat that blows up the wall...
Spooks – agitated movements give way to furious pursuit once released.
Crystal bat – pop goes the bat, but only if hit by a falling skull.



4. ...then rush along the bottom releasing the ghosts from their captivity and in to the weed. Wait at the right-hand side of the screen and – if you've done your job properly – you should be able to collect a heap of diamonds.



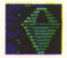
5. Collecting the diamonds is best done by digging along the underside of the walls so that the diamonds drop out of the hole that should have been created. You then rush left-right over and over until you've got your 78. Remember, though, that a falling diamond is as deadly as a falling skull.

Friends and Foes

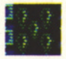
The cheeky chappy you control doesn't appear to have a name – he's merely described as a 'bouncy rotund cave mite' with 'an insatiable appetite for diamonds'. Well, that's accurate enough. He moves in 90 degree verticals or horizontals and you can control him with joystick or keys. Note that you can dig earth or gobble diamonds one space away by holding the fire button and moving the stick in the required direction.

The MASKED AVENGER is the player 2 figure. He operates in just the same way as the 'bouncy rotund cave mite'.

SKULLS are pretty deadly, and have exactly the same properties as rocks in *Boulderdash;* you can dig underneath and run away – if you're quick – but if the skulls catch up you'll be crushed.



DIAMONDS – what you have to collect; but if they drop on you they have the same effect as skulls.



DIAMOND CLUSTERS – get you mucho diamonds at one gobble.

CRYSTAL BATS – whizz through tunnels and do for you if you get too close. Drop an object on them and they explode, so use them to get through solid walls.

CRAZY GHOSTS – you'll often find masses of these things fluttering around in their compounds. Once released, you can crush them with falling skulls or lure them towards the vine for explosive effects and nine diamonds for each smashed spook.

CREEPING VINE – expands all over the place. Detonates bats on contact and turns ghosts into diamonds. When it runs out of growing room the vine itself turns into diamonds, but be careful – let it grow too big and it'll turn into skulls instead!

CUP CAKE – very tasty and gives you an extra life.

RELEASE BOX

Atari ST £19.95dk REVIEWED

No other versions planned

Thrill to the action as the legend comes to life!

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and the
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You will call on all your reserves of courage, strength and skill. Push yourself to the limit, ride your luck and the magical stones may just be yours!

Screens from Arcade Version

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HYSTERIA

Go down in history with **Software Projects**

ANTIQUITY beckons in this first game from Ocean splinter-group Special FX. Someone's meddling with the distant past, altering history to suit their own ends. You'll have to go back in time and stop this conspiracy before the present day is disrupted.

Hysteria's a conventional-looking side-on view scrolling game. You run along left or right, collecting objects and zapping nasties: on each of the game's three levels your aim is to collect the pieces of a jigsaw and thereby flush out an enormous monster. Do this vicious beast in and you're onto the next level, somewhere else in history.

RELEASE BOX

C64/128	£8.95cs £12.95dk	REVIEWED
Spectrum	£7.95cs	REVIEWED

No other versions planned

You start off armed only with laser eyes, the weakest of the weapon types and usable only at very short range. As you run past the classical ruins which form the first level's backdrops, you'll come under fire from statues and gargoyles above you. Leap up, shoot the statues with your eyes and they'll turn into useful objects for you to collect: either lemons, of which more in a moment, or those jigsaw pieces you need to flush out that big monster.

While laser eyes are OK for knocking out the statues, they aren't really enough against the game's many mobile monsters. They'll deal with skeletons, the most numerous nasties, but you'll need something rather more powerful against centaurs, knights in armour and the like. Extra weapons are available, but you'll need to earn them – which is where those lemons come in.

Along the bottom of the screen runs a row of five icons, each representing a weapon or piece of equipment. An arrow above the icons points to the weapon you're currently entitled to select: every time you collect a lemon the arrow moves along one icon, offering you something that bit more powerful.

Up for grabs here are: laser eyes, the default weapon; laser arrows, long range bolts with good hitting power; guardian force, a small ball of energy that orbits and protects you; jet pack, which gives you sustained flight instead of just leaps; and the handy electric bolas, a series of energy balls orbiting you like tiny guardian forces. You can use some of the weapons together but the more powerful ones run out after a while, leaving you with laser eyes again.

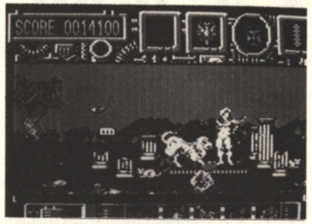
Even with this extra equipment, nasties pile in so thick and fast that you're bound to take some hits. Collisions with monsters or their projectiles wear down your life energy – a disintegrating portrait of your character represents this process on screen. You have a shield to protect yourself when things really hot up, but this too has limited energy and you can't use it while you're moving. There are no lives: run out of life energy and it's game over.

The monsters can pour in on you so thick and fast that surviving to face the monster at the level's end is more a matter of luck than skill. Though the levels do get tougher, you could probably see all three after a couple of hours' play if you got lucky. Equally you might not be able to consistently complete the first level after weeks of practice.

Spectrum version

Lovely parallax scrolling here, and a monochrome option to avoid colour clashes. Plays like the C64 version, with the addition of worms popping out of the ground: these act like lemons if you can catch them!

Getting Hysterical



The monster revealed: leap and fire for all your worth, and you'll be through to the next level.

Hysteria's certainly an attractive game on the C64, and the monster's very striking indeed. It's original stuff as well, but the gameplay's rather too tough for skill to outweigh luck. That and the game's limited size – three levels and then you're back on the first one with even nastier nasties – make it an interesting curiosity rather than an essential buy.

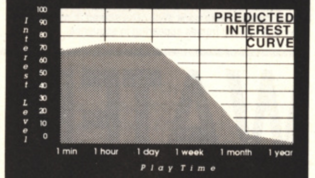
Andy Wilton

VISUAL EFFECTS ■■■■■■▨▨
Smooth parallax and some subtle colouring

AUDIO ■■■▨▨▨▨▨
Very tuneful but only average effects

IQ FACTOR ■■▨▨▨▨▨▨
Very little grey matter required

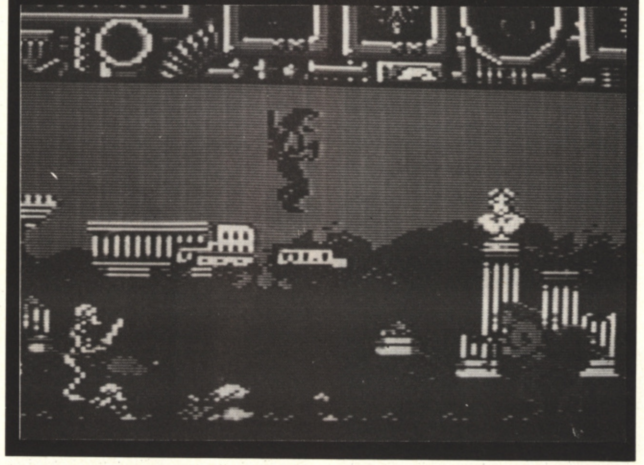
FUN FACTOR ■■■▨▨▨▨▨
Frustration really mars the playability



With only three levels, the hysteria just doesn't last

ACE RATING 698

Airborne: the jet-pack gets you up level with the statues - for a while.



COMICS

Cartoon capers from **Accolade.**

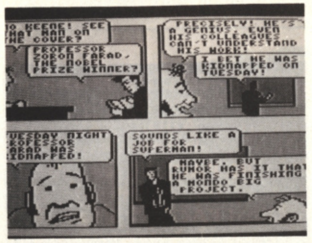
JUMP onto the pages of a computer comic and become Steve Keene, the hero of a comic strip in this 30 quid three disk romp. Use your skill and judgement to decide the fate of Steve, and guide him toward solving the cases of the missing Professor and the reproducing fire hydrants.

Comics could best be described as a graphic adventure, in that the screen is composed of comic book style frames each with a small piece of animation, drawn on screen one after the other. Once the screen is full then it is cleared diagonally from bottom right to top left - simulating the turning of a page - before starting again. At key points in the adventure the player has the opportunity to alter the plot by selecting either an action or a piece of dialogue when prompted. For example, near the begining of the Professor caper Steve Keene stands outside the proff's lab in Vienna while an arrow on screen flashes between the door and the window. By moving the joystick or keys until the arrow remains on either the door or window you can decide Steve's method of entry. The frames that follow from then on are linked to how wise your choice was - much like the role-playing paperbacks that are becoming more and more popular in which you decide upon an action and turn to the appropriate page to read the result.

Should you make a bum decision then Steve ends up in one of eight arcade games (rather like *Frankie Goes To Hollywood*) which he has to complete to continue. Sadly, these arcade sequences add little to the game.

Comics has a lot of humour and is very atmospheric; it's very easy to get the impression that you're actually reading a comic. But as an interactive game it's very limited; your choices are few and far between and do not demand anything like enough thought to make it a real challenge.

Andy Smith



Stripping for pleasure.
The distictive comic book style. The screen is made up of several animated frames appearing in sequence.

RELEASE BOX

C64/128 £29.99dk REVIEWED

No other versions planned

VISUAL EFFECTS ■■■■■■□□

Each frame is very well drawn

AUDIO ■■■■□□□□

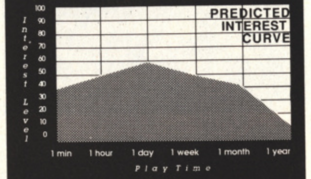
A series of different tunes throughout the game

IQ FACTOR ■■□□□□□□

Not much chance to get your brain into gear

FUN FACTOR ■■■■□□□□

Limited interaction



Tedious once the novelty's worn off

ACE RATING 562

WATER POLO

Splash around the pool with **Gremlin**

FORGET about getting half drowned in pursuit of first the ball and then, when you have it, the opposing team's goal. Now, thanks to Gremlin, you can play water polo without even getting wet. Unfortunately, this armchair version has problems of its own.

You are first presented with an options screen enabling you to choose between one or two players and, if you're playing solo against the computer, the skill level of the opposition. There is also an option to play in the championship where you control one of four teams fighting for the trophy.

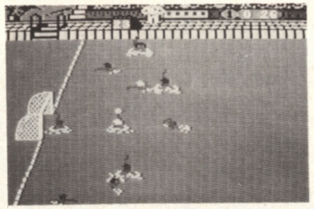
In play the game displays a cross-section of the pool in which the action is taking place with the members of each team represented by the above-water halves of stick-like figures. These sport coloured caps to show which team they belong to. When the ball moves up or down the play area the screen smoothly scrolls to show the new section of pool while the game referee – a rather comical figure - runs along the side to keep up.

Control of a whole team is obviously impossible with only one joystick so water polo solves this by giving you control of the team member nearest the ball.

Or so the instructions claim. In fact, this 'man nearest the ball' control is the most annoying feature of the game and should be renamed the 'man who was at one time close to the ball but has since seen it carried off in to the distance' control. If two team members are close to the ball the control will also annoyingly swap back and forth between them rendering them both practically useless. Couple all these features together with unresponsive movement and a system for throwing the ball that usually leaves you flinging it in quite the wrong direction and things are looking BAD.

If you want to play water polo go to your local swimming pool and not to your local software shop.

Dave Packer



Drowning in despair
The computer getting its team in position to score with the player's team looking despairingly on having given up on the controls long ago.

RELEASE BOX

C64/128 £9.99cs £14.99dk REVIEWED

No other versions planned

VISUAL EFFECTS ■■□□□□□□

Stick-like and dull

AUDIO ■■□□□□□□

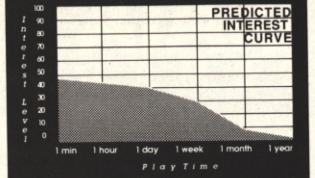
The odd whistle and a little crowd noise

IQ FACTOR ■■□□□□□□

Little scope for tactics

FUN FACTOR ■■□□□□□□

Too annoying to be fun



Won't hold anyone's interest for long

ACE RATING 375

BLAZER

Yet more hideous aliens from **NEXUS**

MAZELI that evil race of bloodthirsty killers, have developed the ultimate Space fighter, Blazer. Your people have only one chance; you must fly over the Kkyger construction asteroids, and steal Blazer before it is used to annihilate your entire race.

Blazer is the latest scrolling shoot-em-up from Nexus and is very similar to their last game, *Hades Nebula*. This time though, instead of grabbing extra weapon systems to increase your fire-power, you actually steal any alien ships you pass over. These are found on launch pads as you scroll your way over the alien landscape with guns blazing while different formations of attacking craft swoop down from the top of the screen launching everything they've got at you.

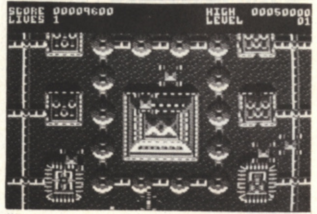
There are six types of ship that you may control ranging from the Terrain fighter through Spit ship, Rotary craft, Shield ship and Bolas to Blazer itself, each one with its own weaponry and/or defences.

Whatever ship you possess, with the possible exception of Blazer, surviving for any great length of time is a very tough task. Some enemy craft attack very fast indeed and often you're simply not given enough time to react before being blasted into a ball of flames. Surviving even the first level is a great test of your dexterity and, for the most part, luck.

Graphically *Blazer* is good with nicely shaded backgrounds and well defined sprites. Sound too is good, if a little run of the mil. But despite this there is little to recommend it above *Hades Nebula*.

Dave Packer

Ship Stealing



When approaching more ships for stealing, be careful not to blast them before you grab them; but don't let up against the aliens.

RELEASE BOX

C64/128 £9.99cs £14.95dk REVIEWED

No other versions planned

VISUAL EFFECTS ■■■■■■□□

Hunky sprites, slick scrolling, and attractive backdrops

AUDIO ■■■■■■□□

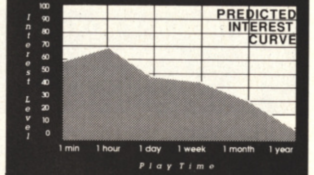
Jolly death-dealing music, or choose FX

IQ FACTOR ■□□□□□□□

Don't think – shoot!

FUN FACTOR ■■■■□□□□

Fast, furious, and frustrating



ACE RATING 708

ON THE TILES

ODIN/FIREBIRD present the first ever cat-em-up

LIFE is tough for a cat on the tiles. If you're not being pursued by killer bird Kitty-hawk it's the blood-sucking fleas and vicious hedgehogs who will finish you; so stay alert and tread carefully for you'll need all of your nine lives to survive the night.

This is the first ever cat simulation to hit the streets, and a very tough game it is too. The object of *On The Tiles* is to gain control of all the territories in your neighbournood and to do this you must collect all the fish-bones in the street you are prowling. Complete a street and it's on to the next for more of the same.

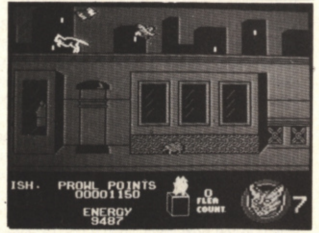
Each street scrolls horizontally past as your cat runs, walks and jumps gracefully along walls, window sills, over roof tops and along the pavement in his bone hunt. Once you have completed a street it's not always obvious where to go to find the next but if you can think in a feline fashion you'll soon discover that nipping through an open gate or a hole in the fence provides the answer.

Kitty's life is not all fish-bones and frolics; a horde of night-prowling creatures are out to make things pretty miserable for him. Fleas and frogs drain energy, as does fighting with other cats – but you can gain that back by grabbing mice and sparrows. Nastiest opponents are hedgehogs and Kitty-hawk, whose touch is fatal.

Fear not – for kitty can spit a green death-dealing substance to despatch his foes, though the Kitty-hawk can often appear on the screen and kill you before you have time to react. This annoying point aside *On the Tiles* is an enjoyable game with some very slinky animation.

Dave Packer

Roof top ramble



Kitty bounds along the roof top, pursued by the Kitty-hawk. Grab the sparrow for extra energy and keep an eye on the pavement - there's critturs waiting.

RELEASE BOX

C64/128 £7.95cs £12.95dk REVIEWED

No other versions planned

VISUAL EFFECTS ■■■■■■■□

Fantastic puss-imation and good backgrounds

AUDIO ■■■■□□□□

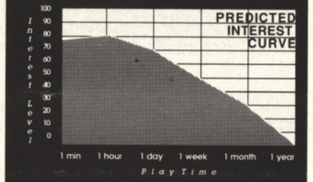
Choice of music or effects – both are good

IQ FACTOR ■■□□□□□□

Remember where you're going and you'll be OK

FUN FACTOR ■■■■□□□□

Lots of action but some annoying features



Interesting and absorbing scenario wil' keep you busy

ACE RATING 784

DEATHSTRIKE

Talented *Scramble* derivative?

SCRAMBLE of course, is that old chestnut in which you zoom through a series of horizontally scrolling caverns bombing and lazering everything the CPU can throw at you. As you go your fuel decreases, but bombing a dump will replenish your supply.

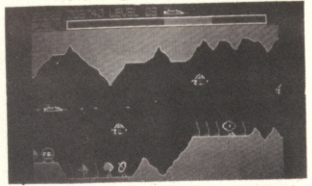
All the levels and enemies are here, including the flying saucers, meteors, missiles and (if you ever get to it) the enemy command base; blast this and you get to do the whole thing all over again.

Graphically this version is nowhere near arcade game standard. The colours used are drab and the scrolling is slightly jerky, making enemy ground placements look rather blurred. Sound too leaves something to be desired - though the spot effects are reasonable *Deathstrike* has one of the worst, most repetitive, and most anoying tunes yet heard on the ST. Fortunately, it can be switched off.

In terms of gameplay it's just about up to scratch, with all the frantic zapping and bombing of the original. But these days we expect more from the ST than a version of a very old game which can't even better that produced for the BBC four years ago.

Dave Packer

Zapping the saucers



RELEASE BOX

Atari ST £14.95dk REVIEWED

No other versions planned

VISUAL EFFECTS ■■□□□□□□

Poor scrolling and drab colours

AUDIO ■■■□□□□□

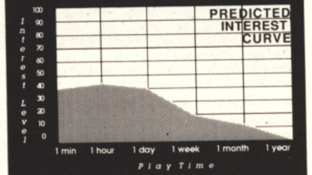
Uninspiring tune and spot effects

IQ FACTOR ■□□□□□□□

Just shoot everything

FUN FACTOR ■■■□□□□□

You can't completely kill off a good classic game idea



Uninspiring but curiosity keeps you going for a bit

ACE RATING 338

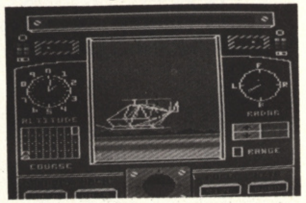
X-15

ALPHA MISSION

Activision help you combat terrorism

TERRORISTS are holding America to ransom and you've been assigned to put a stop to their dastardly plans. At the controls of the X-15 spaceplane, you must fly through a total of six stages and destroy the orbiting space station which the terrorists are using as a hideout.

Swingin' on a star.



Your view of the play area is through a centrally placed square around which your instruments display information about altitude, speed, fuel remaining and other flight parameters. Each level of the game puts you up against two different enemies (all drawn using vector graphics). The first level has you fighting to survive attacks from helicopters and cruise missiles, and the second has you dodging different types of jets.

A small grid is visible to the left of the view window, and this shows how close you are to your destination. Once you've reached a certain point in the game a scrolling message across the top of the screen tells you to climb to the next level. Should you receive a hit from one of the enemy then your damage indicator rises by a certain percentage (that varies according to what actually hit you) until at 99% you've failed.

RELEASE BOX

C64/128 £9.99cs £14.99dk REVIEWED

No other versions planned

Control of your plane involves moving a cross hair sight around the screen. Movement is limited to left, right, up and down. This is also your sight for firing missiles, so aiming at your enemies means you're also altering your course to fly straight at them.

The graphics are well drawn in the vector style and well animated too. Sound effects include the constant roar of your engines and explosions.

X-15 is certainly a playable enough little shoot-em up and is good fun while it lasts, but it's too easy to provide a long term challenge.

Andy Smith

VISUAL EFFECTS ■■■■■□□□

Well-animated vector graphics

AUDIO ■■■■■□□□

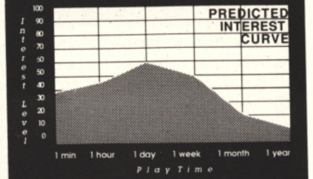
Atmospheric effects

IQ FACTOR ■■□□□□□□

Simple shoot-em-up

FUN FACTOR ■■■■■□□□

Rapidly becomes X-iting



High flying initially, but soon comes down to earth

ACE RATING 493

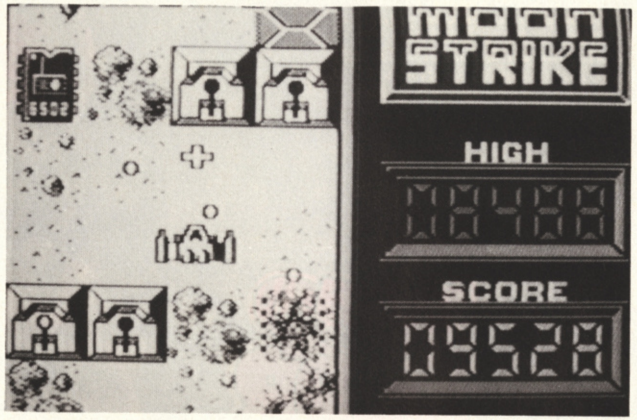
MOON STRIKE

Shoot the moon with **MIRRORSOFT'S** mono masterpiece

IF you thought New Zealand was a land of sheep rather than shoot-em-ups, this vertical scroller from NZ team Binary Innovations just might change your mind. The story so far: mad scientist Humpty Bogus has moved on from inventing the digital teabag and landscaping the Moon: now he's going to destroy the Earth. Unless, that is, you can blast through the prof's lunar defences and bomb his Tachyon Vortex super- weapon.

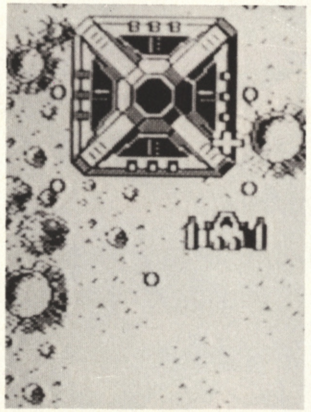
If you're loading the 128K version you'll have to read the inlay for that, but 48K users can catch it as MovieLoad - an illustrated story which unfolds as the game loads. Clever stuff this, and witty too - but then so's the game itself.

At first glance, *Moon Strike* is nothing new. You fly up a strip of terrain half a screen wide, shooting airborne nasties and bombing static gun-emplacements. Crosshairs a fixed distance in front of your craft act as bomb sights: line them up on a ground target, pull back on the stick while pressing fire and then veer off to one side - almost everything on the ground fires at you, so flying in a straight line is unhealthy. Fight your way through a whole level of this plus a very nasty fort at the end, and you're onto the next level.



Tough opposition

If it moves, shoot it. If it doesn't move, bomb it!



Wrecking an end-of-level fortress: get a bomb right in the centre, or it'll saturate you with bullets and corrosive gas.

So far so *Xevious*-ish, you might think, but graphically the game is full of surprises. You can buzz the Mona Lisa, dodge the flak from deadly coin-slots and blast the marauding light bulbs for all your worth. The scrolling window is all in mono admittedly, but the detail and visual flair of the terrain are very striking. If the wacky humour of it distracts you at crucial moments, well that's all part of the fun.

But don't get the impression that *Moon Strike's* all graphics and gimmicks: there's plenty of lasting gameplay too, even if it's not so immediately obvious. The action's quite slow if you're watching over someone's shoulder, but once you're in the pilot's seat you'll find it plenty fast enough. *Moon Strike's* not really about reflexes: it's more about weaving through swarms of enemy bullets, using the tiniest of gaps in fire patterns to escape certain death - and this can get very hairy indeed.

Though the flying hazards don't appear in any particular formation, the layout of the ground targets is constant. Learning the game helps your progress a good deal, but the earlier stages aren't a doddle even when you know them well. The forts at the end of each level remain a nasty problem, and only split-second timing will get you past them intact.

There's no particular element of the game that you couldn't find elsewhere - graphics and loading sequence to one side - but *Moon Strike* does combine those familiar shoot-em-up components exceptionally well. Very addictive, witty and nicely judged too!

Andy Wilton

RELEASE BOX

Spectrum 48k £7.95cs REVIEWED

Spectrum 128k £7.95cs REVIEWED

No other versions planned

VISUAL EFFECTS ■■■■■■■□

No colour – but it's well-drawn and witty

AUDIO ■■■■□□□□

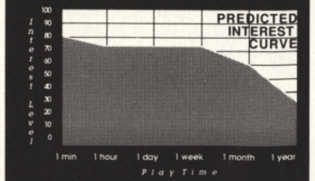
Beeps on 48K, pleasant tune on 128K

IQ FACTOR ■■□□□□□□

Wracks your nerves, not your brain

FUN FACTOR ■■■■■■■□

Gripping stuff, but tough too!



Playability that lasts!

ACE RATING 898

PIRANHA ATTACK!

YOGI BEAR

Hey Hey Hey!
Are you smarter than the average bear? You'll need to be to get out of this one. Boo-Boo's been bear-napped and must be rescued before hibernation time. Hunters, mooses, vultures, bees, caverns, geysers as well as good old Ranger Smith are determined to stop you!

Spectrum Commodore Amstrad
Cassettes £9.95 Discs £14.95

TRAP THROUGH THE DOOR

Berk is back!
Now you can actually explore the dark and nasty regions for yourself as you try to rescue your friend Boni, trapped in the murky depths. Along the way all sorts of creepy critters will try to spook you in exciting arcade action!

Spectrum Commodore Amstrad
Cassette £8.95 Discs £14.95

FLUNKY

The Royal Family as they have never been seen before! This is your chance to work at Buck House — as a menial manservant. Your job is to cater to the residents' every whim, but you'll need cunning, strong nerves and quick reactions if you are going to avoid a nasty end.

Spectrum Commodore Amstrad
Cassettes £9.95 Discs £14.95
Coming soon for the Atari ST.

ROY OF THE ROVERS

Melchester Rovers is under threat of closure from greedy property developers. On the eve of a special celebrity match organised to save the club, Roy's team mysteriously disappears. Unless he rescues them he may end up facing the opposition alone!

Spectrum Commodore Amstrad
Cassettes £9.95 Discs £14.95

JUDGE DEATH

Megacity is being terrorised by the Dark Judges — Death himself and his cronies Fear, Fire and Mortis. They are dedicated to putting an end to life itself. As Judge Anderson you stand alone. Only your psychic powers and blazing gun can save Megacity!

Spectrum Commodore Amstrad
Cassettes £9.95 Discs £14.95

GUNBOAT

Powerful, manoeuvrable and deadly, the Gunboat under your command carries the most lethal waterborn weaponry to date. Deep in the complex maze of fjords and canal systems are your targets — huge submarine pens. Your mission — to seek and destroy!

Spectrum Commodore Amstrad
Cassettes £8.95 Discs £13.95

For release schedules, please contact Helen Holland at the address below. Piranha games are available from all good stockists or, in case of difficulty, direct from Helen Holland, Piranha, 4 Little Essex Street, London WC2R 3FL. Tel: 01-836 6633.

The Ultimate Maze Challenge

There are no random events in **XOR**'s labyrinthine palace and there is no premium on hand-eye coordination. You have all the time in the world to work out the precise nature of the hazards you encounter. Logical thinking, strategy and tactical problem solving are all part of the **XOR** experience. And **XOR** is not simply about finding solutions. If you can solve the entire puzzle (15 levels plus an encrypted anagram), you qualify to be a member of the **ORDER of XOR**, with a certificate and a badge to prove it.

"...this is one of the most compulsive, cunning and attractive programs I've seen for some time! .... the game is superb - a very classy original twist on the basic maze theme" A+B Computing *(as reviewed on a BBC micro)*

XOR's Features

- 15 graded mindbending mazes
- Each maze approximately 16 screens
- Super smooth high speed scrolling
- High resolution quality graphics
- High speed or step-by-step replay
- Intriguing logical problems
- Interactive dynamic puzzles

XOR - Now available on;

Commodore 64	Disk	£12.95
	Cassette	£9.95
Spectrum	Cassette	£7.95
Amstrad	Disk	£14.95
	Cassette	£9.95
BBC	Disk	£12.95
	Cassette	£9.95

Coming Soon for IBM PC and compatibles

XOR Designer - Available for BBC and Commodore computers.

Logotron Guarantee:
All orders dispatched within 5 days of receipt of order.
Faulty software will be replaced immediately.
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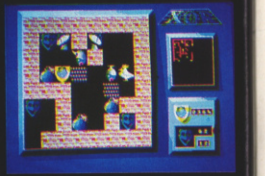


REVENGE II

Mastertronic's **MAD** range gives birth to mutant camels.

LLAMA-LOVING legend Jeff Minter turned the games market into his own private zoo a few years back with games like *Attack of the Mutant Camels*, *Sheep in Space*, and *Mama Llama*. Now, just when you thought it was safe to tip-toe back into the menagerie, he's back – at budget price.

Back too is the evil Empire of Zzyax and peace-loving Earthlings have only one hope - the 90ft tall, neutronium-shielded, lazer-spitting, death-dealing Mega-Camels of whispered legend.

Revenge II follows the original quite closely in its game-play but has a number of new features thrown in and, of course, 100 new attack waves to sharpen your reflexes on. Your camel walks right along a horizontally-scrolling landscape blasting a whole host of strange and often amusing looking aliens. You must survive this onslaught until you have travelled the seven kilometers to the end of the wave and, though this only acts as a time limit, it's no small task when you have large groups of formation jumping Yaks attempting to bounce your camel to a pulp.

If you do make it to the end of a wave with any strength left, your camel is granted a number of credits (the more strength left, the more credits you get). Credits are used to buy new weapons, armour or even an extra beastie. The law of supply and demand applies, however – each time you buy an item its price increases, so be careful how often you make use of different offerings.

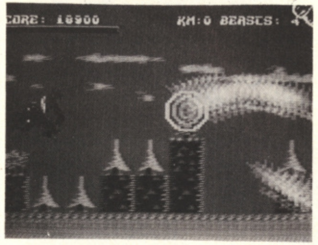
Which weapons you select and how you approach each wave is very important and often requires considerable thought, adding an interesting angle to the zap-em-up theme. £2.99 for a slice of history, even a re-humped slice, is going to be very difficult to refuse.

Dave Packer

RELEASE BOX

C64/128	£2.99cs	REVIEWED

No other versions planned at present



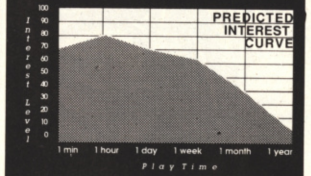
Yak Attack!
Your flying mutant camel deals death to leaping yaks with his newly-acquired mega-bullets – but there's still five kilometers to go before you can relax. There's a special grid map in the program that enables you to choose your path through the different attack waves.

VISUAL EFFECTS ■■■□□□□
Attractive colouring but often crudely defined

AUDIO ■■■□□□□
Pleasant tune, lots of noises, but nothing special

IQ FACTOR ■■■■□□□
Some wave/weapon combinations require brain strain

FUN FACTOR ■■■■□□□
Very amusing in parts but often frustrating



Fast varied action will keep you at the keyboard

ACE RATING 750

SUNBURST

HEWSON'S sunny shoot-em-up

SOLAR systems are big things you know, so when they start forming all over the galaxy then someone notices. When they start threatening the existence of OUR solar system then someone's gotta put a stop to them and that's where you come in.

In your space ship (viewed from above) you fly over alien rock formations and gather enough energy to destroy the large sun that is on each level. Gathering energy involves shooting the aliens that come swarming out of the black holes scattered around the rock formations. Shooting the correct alien results in a small energy bubble being left behind that sits quietly and decomposes in ten seconds; fly over the bubble and a small gauge at the base of the screen rises toward the positive sign. When enough energy has been collected the gauge changes and you can fly into the sun to complete the level.

Other aliens are not so helpful; some will teleport you around the level, whereas others will complicate matters by pinching your stored energy. A certain alien type will render you invulnerable for a short space of time and so you must try and bump into these instead of shooting them.

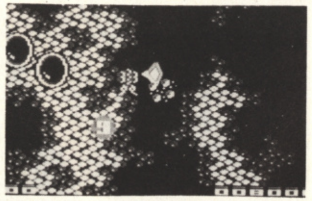
Gameplay is tough to start with - your ship is continually moving as you steer it around the screen, and this takes a little getting used to. The graphics are very nice, with the backgrounds varying for each level and the aliens well animated. A title tune plays at the start and the effects are good, if a little sparse. Overall, *Sunburst's* a neat game that is fun to play once you've mastered the control technique.

Andy Smith

RELEASE BOX

C64/128	£2.99cs	REVIEWED

No other versions planned



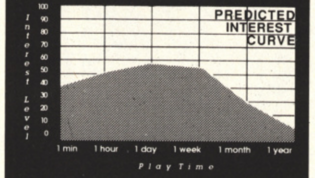
Getting hot and bothered.
Aliens are a mixed bunch; some are to be avoided at all costs whilst others are positively helpful. Gain enough energy from the correct alien type and it's time to head for the sun.

VISUAL EFFECTS ■■■■□□□
Colourful and varied backgrounds

AUDIO ■■■□□□□
Springy title tune and nice spot FX

IQ FACTOR ■■□□□□□
Not a brain-teaser

FUN FACTOR ■■■■□□□
OK once you're mastered the controls



Thin on gameplay, but fun while it lasts

ACE RATING 542

If you're on the look-out for conversions for YOUR machine, look no further. The ACE Updates Pages give you an up-to-the-minute report on which games are coming on-line for your micro, together with brief details of the quality of the conversion process and ratings for the game. Check it out here before you dig into your purse...

SPECTRUM

SOLOMON'S KEY

U.S.Gold £8.99 cs

An enjoyable arcade strategy game that was great fun on the Amstrad. The Spectrum version is just as playable, and every bit as addictive. Not quite as colourful as the Amstrad version but still an entertaining game.

● ACE RATING 755

RENEGADE

Imagine £7.95 cs

Amstrad version reviewed Issue 1 - ACE Rating 847

This all-action conversion has identical gameplay to the Amstrad – and that means it's pretty hot stuff. Graphics are very good and the colour is very well used. Keyboard response is a bit on the slow side but poses no major problems. If you liked the look of the Amstrad version then you should be happy with the Spectrum conversion – as long as you can cope with the violence.

● ACE RATING 845

TAI-PAN

Ocean £7.95 cs

ST version reviewed Issue 1 - ACE Rating 697

You can't expect ST graphics on the Spectrum but you *can* expect good game play – and that's just what you get with this version of *Tai-Pan*. The graphical thrills and time wasters have been taken out leaving space for a very enjoyable trading/strategy game.

● ACE RATING 755

C64/128

RENEGADE

Imagine £8.95 cs, £14.95 dk

Amstrad version reviewed Issue 1 - ACE Rating 847

Renegade on the C64 is not as exciting or as polished as on other machines. Only having four sprites on the screen at any one time means you lose the sense that you're fighting against huge odds. The graphics themselves are poor – and what is a good game on other machines becomes very average on the C64.

● ACE RATING 500

SOLOMON'S KEY

US Gold £9.99 cs, £14.99 dk

Solomon's Key hasn't lost anything in the conversion to 64. The game plays slightly faster though the graphics aren't quite up to the Amstrad's standard. A good all round conversion.

ARMAGGEDON MAN

Martech £12.95 cs, £13.95 dk

Spectrum version reviewed Issue 1 - ACE Rating 793

This C64 version of Martech's strategy game is an improvement on other versions, largely because a jaunty tune now plays throughout the game. The graphics, too, have been enhanced.

● ACE RATING 810

AMSTRAD

ARMAGGEDON MAN

Martech £12.95 cs, £19.95 dk

Spectrum version reviewed Issue 1 - ACE Rating 793

Identical in gameplay to the Spectrum version. A little more colourful on the Amstrad but not especially so. The seasoned Amstrad strategist will enjoy this struggle to stop the world blowing up; the dabbler in strategy games would do better to steer clear.

● ACE RATING 793

XOR

Logotron £9.95 cs, £14.95 dk

Spectrum version reviewed Issue 1 - ACE Rating 927

A real brain-bender on the Spectrum and the Amstrad version is just the same. The game plays identically on the Amstrad – the puzzles are just as fiendish.

● ACE RATING 927

SURVIVOR

U.S.Gold £9.99 cs £14.95 dk

Spectrum version reviewed Issue 1 - ACE Rating 604

Not very pretty to look at; the graphics are colourful but the screen looks very messy.

Animation is also poor. Gameplay is the same as for the Spectrum being just as demanding when it comes to correct positioning for jumping etc. But *Survivor* doesn't get any better on the Amstrad.

● ACE RATING 570

AMIGA

KARATE KID 2

Microdeal £24.95 dk

The second conversion of an old ST game but this time things have been altered to a greater extent; there are lots more backdrops and the ice-chopping bonus screen crops up a lot more often. Otherwise it's the same choppin', kickin' action against pretty backgrounds.

● ACE RATING 720

GOLDRUNNER

Microdeal £24.95dk

The ST shoot-em-up finally hits the Amiga. Joystick control has, for some unknown reason, been dropped so it's mouse only ,but other than this the two versions are almost identical, though speech and music have been slightly improved. Still a very demanding blast with excellent graphics – shame it sends you back to the start of the stage every time you die.

● ACE RATING 720

ATARI ST

BARBARIAN

Palace Software £14.99dk

A disappointing conversion of the chop and slash shocker, with graphics little improved from the Amstrad and C64 versions. Some very good digitised sound effects have been included but the animation looks jerky and isn't really what we expect of an ST game.

● ACE RATING 640

RAPID FIRE

Blow 'em away with **MASTERTRONIC**

Rapid Fire is played using joystick only over six levels of increasing difficulty. The background scrolls from left to right with your character staying centre-screen as you move through a warehouse dealing death and foiling the bank-busting ambitions of a bunch of computer-literate crooks – achieved by blasting 'plasma computers' at the end of each level and the 'central power electrode' at the end of the game. You have five lives, a machine gun, and a limitless supply of ammunition to expend in the restoration of law and order.

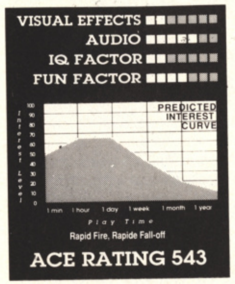
Smooth animation and scrolling do not compensate for poorly drawn sprites and drab backgrounds, though the sound makes a brave attempt to raise the game out of the ordinary with good effects and a lively tune. A reasonable budget game, but don't expect much in the lasting interest stakes.

Andy Smith

RELEASE BOX

C64/128	£2.99cs	REVIEWED
Spectrum	£2.99cs	REVIEWED

Other versions undecided



Rapid Fire, Rapide Fall-off

ACE RATING 543

Spectrum Version

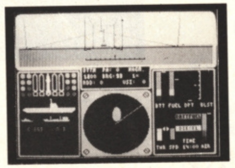
Poor gameplay, worse graphics, dire effects make this a big no-no.

OCEAN CONQUEROR

Aquatic antics from **HEWSON**

Set onboard a submarine and armed with anti-ship missiles and torpedoes you must destroy a number of enemy freighters and destroyers within a time limit.

Your screen is divided horizontally, with the bottom half containing all your neccessary instruments and the top half taken up with your periscope view of the surrounding ocean. This top view can be switched to a map of the game area at any time. Should you submerge – even just to a depth of one foot – then your periscope view disappears and is replaced by the map until you re-surface. This is probably the most annoying part of the whole game because in order to make an effective strike against an enemy vessel you need to be on the surface - which takes away the whole advantage of being in a submarine, i.e. the ability to strike unobserved.



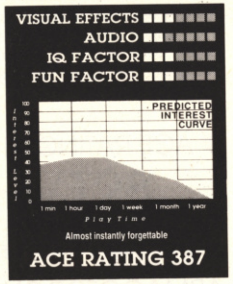
The screen is well designed and colourful and the majority of the wire frame graphics are fine. All the simulation elements are there, but it's a pity about the periscope problem.

Andy Smith

RELEASE BOX

Spectrum	£2.99cs	REVIEWED

No other versions planned



Almost instantly forgettable

ACE RATING 387

DRAUGHTS GENIUS

Hewson get into the board-game **RACK-IT**

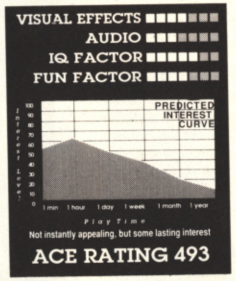
IF draughts is your game then give *Draughts Genius* a go. You face Albert Einstein across the old chequered board and if he starts to win he gets very smug indeed.

Genius gives good strong opposition on its higher levels though it's by no means unbeatable. The amusing graphics add to the interest. But wasn't Albert more of a chess fan?

Dave Packer

RELEASE BOX

Spectrum	£2.99cs	REVIEWED
Amstrad CPC	£2.99cs	OCTOBER

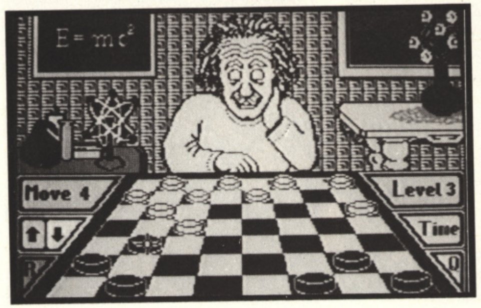


Not instantly appealing, but some lasting interest

ACE RATING 493

Albert's Game

You may be having an interesting game but think about your move too long and Einstein falls asleep.



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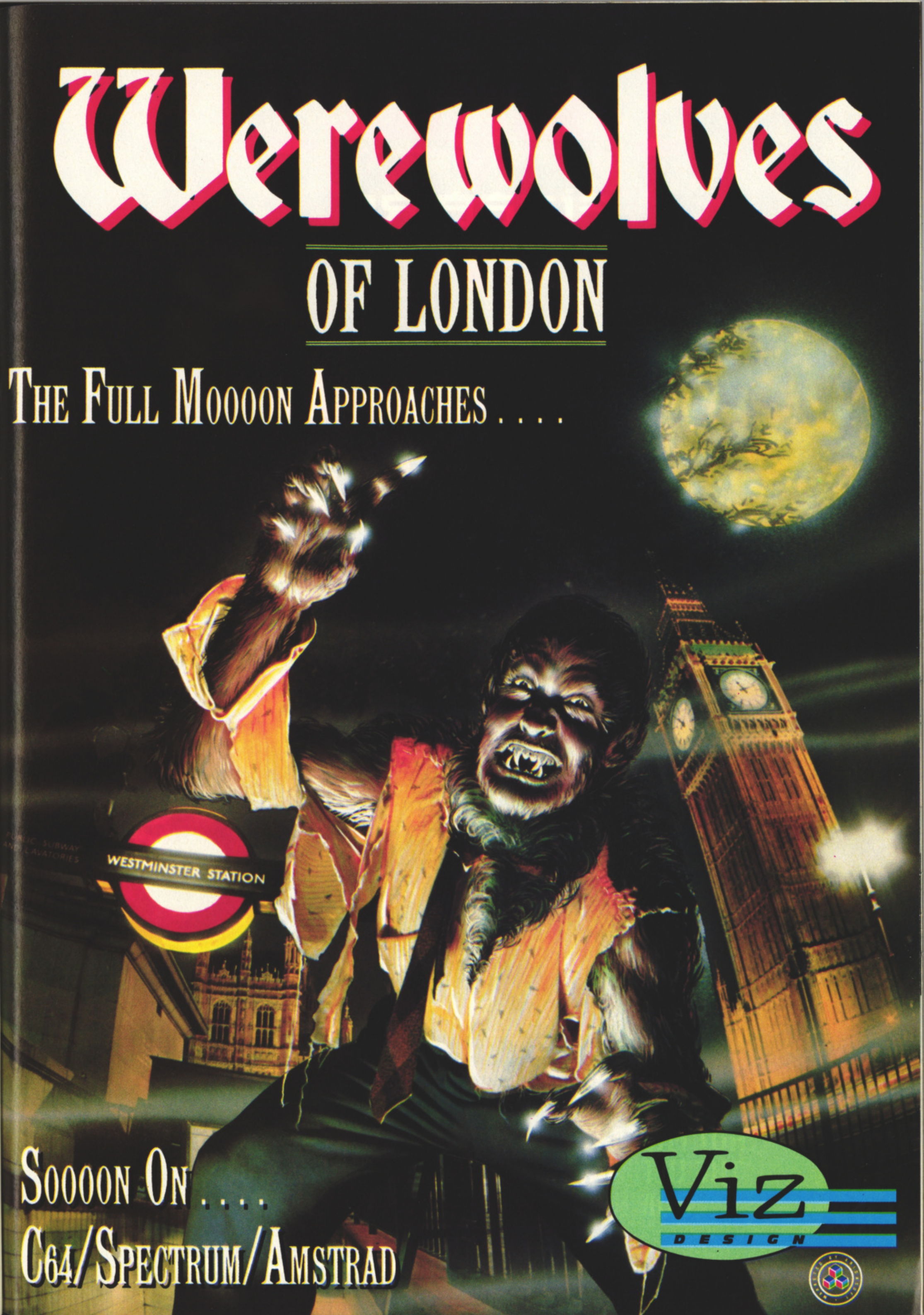

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30 top games from then and now

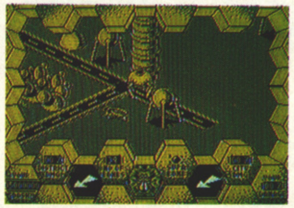
BUDGET GOLD

The budget market's a jungle; wander in there and your pocket can get torn to pieces by games that don't deliver anything but a bill. But if you hunt in the right way you can pick up some real prizes, especially games that once were full-price Kings of the Jungle, but can now be bagged for bargain budget prices. *Decathlon*, *Boulderdash*, *Dropzone*; at less than three quid can you afford not to sniff them out? To guide you through the thick undergrowth of budget ACE brings you the lowdown on 30 top games – half of them programs you'd once have paid a small fortune for.

AMAUROTE

Mastertronic

Spectrum	£2.99cc
C64	£2.99 cs
Amstrad	£2.99 cs



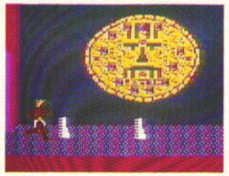
As an officer in the Royal Army of Amaurote it's your job to rid the city of the recent insect invasion. Climb into your Arachnus and stomp around the 25 sectors of the city destroying the queen and any remaining insects in each sector. The stunning graphics and smooth animation combine to make *Amaurote* a fantastic looking game that is also addictive and a joy to play.

AZTEC CHALLENGE

Top Ten

C64	£1.99

The prospect of being the next human sacrifice to the Aztec sun gods is not very appealing, which explains why you're constantly on the run in this 7-screen Commodore classic. Dodge spears, tumbling boulders and miscellaneous falling objects as you try to escape a grisly death. Although it does look a trifle dated the gameplay is still pretty compelling and there's also an excellent throbbing soundtrack.

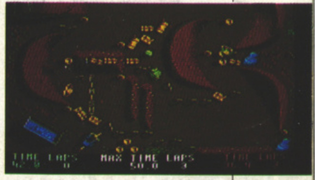


BMX SIMULATOR

Codemasters

Spectrum	£1.99 cs
C64	£1.99 cs
Amstrad	£1.99 cs

BMX Simulator puts you on the saddle in a race against either the computer or a friend. You both ride simultaneously and must complete a set number of laps within the time limit. All the bumps and burms affect your bike realistically and there are seven different tracks to race over making this an addictive and enjoyable game that is great fun to play.



BOULDERDASH

Prism Leisure Corporation

Spectrum	£2.99 cs
C64	£2.99 cs
Amstrad	£2.99 cs

A game that has everything – instant addiction, long-term challenge, frenetic excitement as the clock ticks down and extremely tricky puzzles. You have to collect jewels buried in caverns, digging

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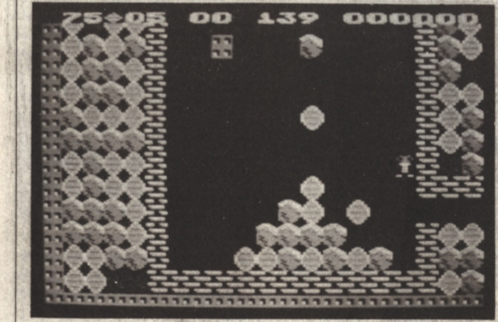
away boulders and earth to get at them. Boulders can drop and cause you serious damage, while the jewels are often hidden by seemingly impenetrable walls. Complex, yet great fun, *Boulderdash* is a classic you can't afford to miss out on in its budget reincarnation. ▼

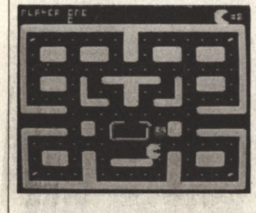


CLASSIC MUNCHER

Bubble Bus

Spectrum	£1.99 cs
Amstrad	£1.99 cs

Not much to say about this except that it's an excellent Pac-man clone ▼



and not many games have matched that for excitement and addictiveness.

CRAZY COMETS

Mastertronic

C64	£1.99 cs

That old arcade classic *Mad Planets* hits the 64 in style with *Crazy Comets*, originally released at full-price by Martech. The Universe is going mad, new planets are forming then spinning out of control through the cosmos. They must be destroyed – guess who's been given the task. It's all frantic action as you race around the screen blasting the huge planets and fiery comets all to the accompaniment of one of the best ever Rob Hubbard sound tracks.

DECATHLON

Firebird

Spectrum	£1.99 cs
C64	£1.99 cs
Amstrad	£1.99 cs

Run, jump and throw your way to gold in the micro version of the Track & Field test. An awful lot of waggling is involved and it's probably worth wearing a tracksuit if you're into some serious competition. Make sure you've got a tough joystick too; 'waggling' takes an awful lot out of them.

DROPZONE

Us Gold/Americana

C64	£2.99 cs

The ultimate *Defender* clone accompanied by graphics as smooth and sweet as they're fast. Your task as the jet-packing spaceman is to rescue the poor humanoids from the unwelcome attention of alien invaders and then leave at your Dropzone. Fast and furious action.

FEUD

Mastertronic

C64	£1.99 cs
Amstrad	£1.99 cs
Spectrum	£1.99 cs

Two great wizards clash in a battle of magic. You play Learic while the computer assumes the shape of Leanoric, your brother and rival in magic. Rush around the land collecting herbs to brew spells then zip off to find Leanoric and blast him with everything you've got. Careful though – he's got much the same thing in mind. ▼

DOPPLEGANGER

FLYSPY

Mastertronic

Amstrad	£1.99 cs

An evil genius has built a super computer and is using it to close down large sections of the national power grid. You have been shrunk ▼ and placed inside a small helicopter so that you can infiltrate the computer's innards. This arcade adenture has brilliant graphics, plenty of puzzles and even a *Centipede* clone sub-game built in for good measure. Fly around the colourful computer complex until you find all you need to blow it all sky high with the N-bomb.

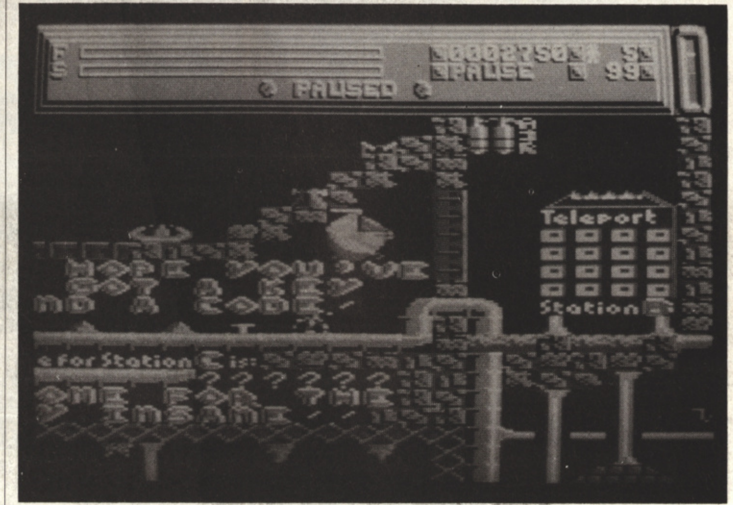
FORBIDDEN FOREST

Top Ten

C64	£1.99 cs

Atmospheric and exciting, *Forbidden Forest* takes you on a quest to destroy the evil Demogorgon in a dark and intimidating jungle. Armed only with a bow and arrow you have to take ▼

on giant spiders, enormous bumble bees, fat frogs and a host of other nasties until you get to the Demogorgon. Day turns to night as your journey goes on, accompanied by a brilliant musical score. Gameplay and graphics may seem a little ancient these days (the game is about four years old) but it's still one of the most atmospheric pieces of software around.

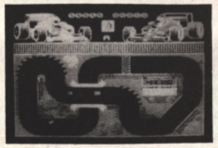

PAUSED
PAUSE
Teleport Station

GRAND PRIX SIMULATOR

Code Masters

Spectrum	£1.99 cs
Amstrad	£1.99 cs

This is a car racing game where the entire track is seen from overhead. You and a friend race against the computer's grey car avoiding oil patches and grabbing the bonus tokens that appear on the track as you skid round the bends at break-neck speed. Very fast, very competetive and great value. Will be interesting to see how the micro conversion of the Atari coin-op **Super Sprint** compares.

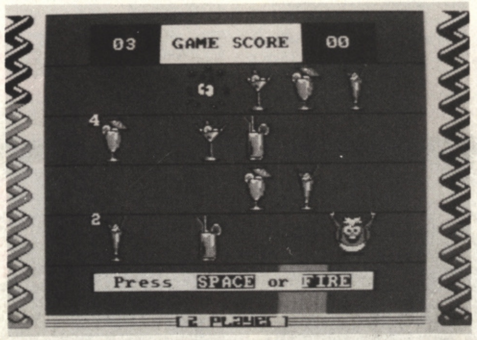


HARVEY HEADBANGER

Firebird

Amstrad	£1.99 cs
C64	£1.99 cs
Spectrum	£1.99 cs

Steer the cute spherical Harvey around the playing area, swinging hand over hand as he paints the background blue. Surround the opposing Hamish with blue paint to defeat him, or just surround an area of his colour (red) to make cocktails. Drink up, crash into Hamish and surround him while he's still dizzy – before he does the same to you! You'll need to think like a grandmaster and drink like a fish to beat the computer's five graded Hamishes, and there's a two-player option as well.

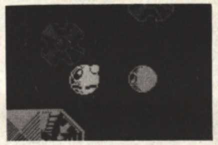


I, BALL

Firebird

Spectrum	£1.99 cs
C64	£1.99 cs

A vertically scrolling shoot-em-up in which your mission is to rescue your pals who have been kidnapped by the totally evil Terry Ball. As a ball yourself, armed with a small front firing gun, rescuing your buddies could prove tough but there are loads of extra weapons you can pick up on the way to help such as smart bombs or the awesome Rainbow Ripple laser, which as every good ball knows is not to be trifled with.



KIKSTART

Mastertronic

C64	£1.99 cs

You've seen the TV program – now play the game. In this motor-bike simulation you must balance and jump your way over a whole host of obstacles including barrels, telephone boxes, ramps, logs and busses in a race against the clock. *Kikstart* has eight different levels and split-screen scrolling action . A great test of skill, precision and timing for those who like to get on a bike and get that engine revving.

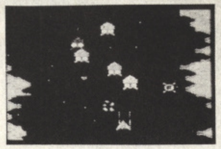
KIKSTART
Off-Road Simulator

LAZER FORCE

Code Masters

C64	£1.99 cs

A brilliant scrolling arcade shoot-em-up. With elements taken from such great arcade classics as *Salamander*, *Centipede* and *Moon Cresta* this game has enough fast blasting to keep any ardent games player happy. *Lazer Force* has 32 different levels each containing four sections including a docking sequence, a millipede shoot, a race against the clock through a twisting corridor and the main scrolling blast em screen in which even the scenery attacks you.

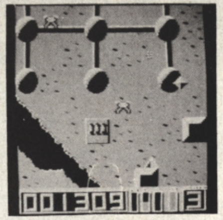


MISSION GENOCIDE

Firebird

Amstrad	£1.99 cs

Some of the smoothest vertical scrolling you'll ever see on the Amstrad. *Mission Genocide* has all the elements of the recent shoot-em-ups including extra weapon and shields collection and a host of different aliens. With twelve levels of colourful zapping and bombing action to work your way through this is a game that will keep your finger on the trigger for a long time to come.



MAGIC KNIGHT TRILOGY

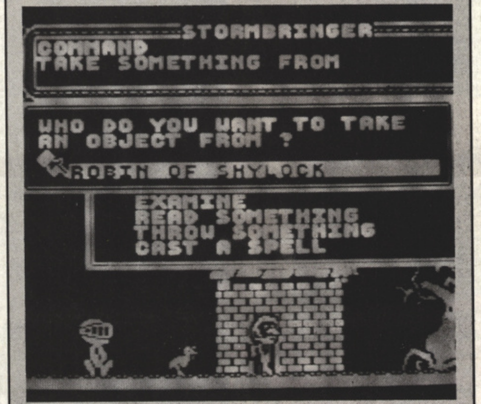
(Spellbound, Knight Tyme, Storm Bringer)

Mastertronic

Amstrad	£2.99 cs each
Spectrum	£2.99 cs each
C64	£2.99 cs

(Spellbound only)

This trilogy is a series of menu-driven arcade adventurest which, as well as containing all the running around and jumping you'd expect, have a complex system of interaction between characters. In *Spellbound* you must rescue Gimbal the Wizard from the fearsome Castle of Karn; in *Knight Tyme* you must find a way back through time after being catapulted in to the 25th century; while in the final part, *Storm Bringer*, we discover that the magic knight has been split in two on his travels – one part is good, the other evil. You can't kill yourself, so the only solution is to merge the two. But how? Lots of action, plenty of thought and excellent graphics make all three winners.



STORMBRINGER

COMMAND
TAKE SOMETHING FROM

WHO DO YOU WANT TO TAKE
AN OBJECT FROM ?
ROBIN OF SHYLOCK

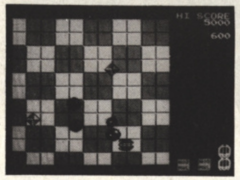
EXAMINE
READ SOMETHING
THROW SOMETHING
CAST A SPELL

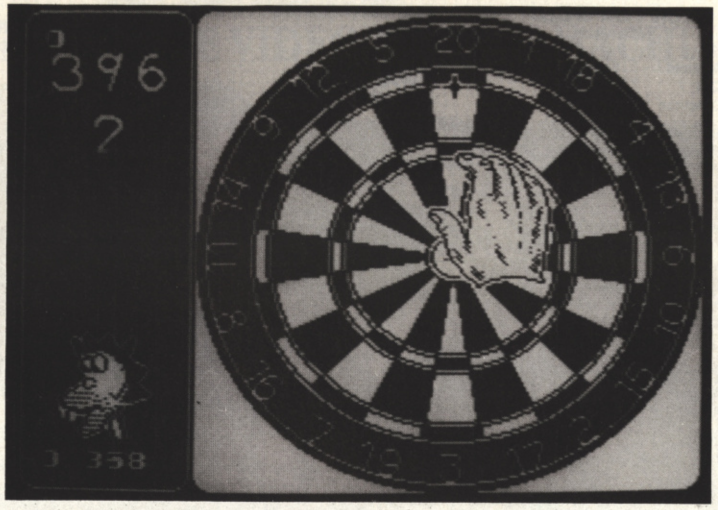
MOTOS

Mastertronic

Spectrum	£2.99 cs
C64	£2.99 cs
Amstrad	£2.99 cs

Aliens are invading our starbase and the only way of getting rid of them is to use your small craft to knock them off the edge. But be careful – they don't like being pushed around and if you make one false move it will be you who's sent tumbling off in to deep space. Grab energy pods for extra bump power amd wings to let you jump any gaps on the base's surface and get bashing those aliens.



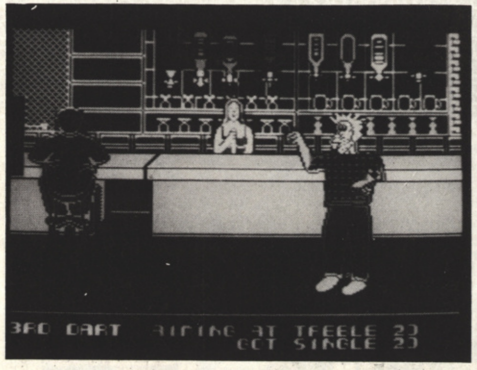


180

Mastertronic

C64	£2.99 cs
Amstrad	£2.99 cs
Spectrum	£2.99 cs

The definitive computer darts game. If you must play arrows on your micro then this is the one to get 180 plays against an assortment of foes or against a friend If the championship game you begin in the quarter finals and have to beat tow computer-controlled players before facing Jammy Jim the world champion who you'll need all your skill to defeat. If you get bored playing the computer or friend then you can try the race around the board against the clock option. Hit each number from 1 to 20 in sequence before your time reaches zero to win. Raise your pint and get your belly on the oche.

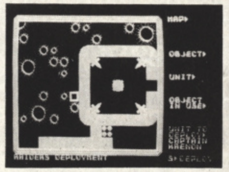


REBELSTAR

Firebird

Spectrum	£1.99 cs
C64	£1.99 cs
Amstrad	£1.99 cs

Originally released by Red Shift under the title *Rebelstar Raiders*. Firebird bought the game and improved it in several ways before releasing it as *Rebelstar*. A skirmish wargame for one or two players that is incredibly easy to play and extremely difficult to win. The computer opponent takes no prisoners and wipes out your raiders at every opportunity. Break into Moonbase Delta and attempt to destroy the Isaac computer which is at the heart of the complex.



REVENGE OF THE MUTANT CAMELS

Mastertronic

C64	£1.99 cs

It's them again, those huge hairy humped beasts on their scrolling crusade to put an end to the evil Empire of Zzyax for ever. Blast the hordes of zany aliens through 55 waves of non-stop action as your camel walks and bounces his way along each 7km stretch of Minter madness. The game still seems very wacky indeed, even after all these years. See also our review of *Revenge 2* in this very issue.

RASTERSCAN

Mastertronic

Spectrum	£1.99 cs
C64	£1.99 cs
Amstrad	£1.99 cs

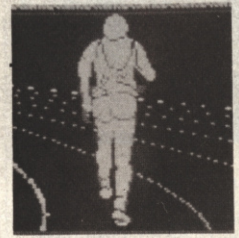
Rasterscan is set on board a crippled spaceship and you control a spherical droid with a corrupted memory. You must roam the ship and repair the broken fuel pipes before re-starting the engines and steering the ship away from the star for which it's heading. Some wonderful digitised graphics and lots of logical puzzles make this an enjoyable game that is very tough to solve.

RASTERSCAN
MASTERTRONIC
LIMITED

RUN FOR GOLD
Alternative

Amstrad	£1.99 cs
C64	£1.99 cs
Spectrum	£1.99 cs

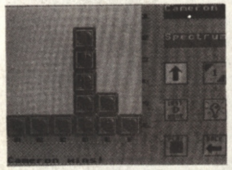
Excellent non-waggling racing game in which you can have a crack at 400, 800, or 1500 metre races. The graphics are unusually clear and a fair amount of skill is needed to do well – especially since the runners are very high class, sporting almost household names such as S. Ebesco. Thrill as you make it from track rooky to crack athlete to tough of the track and – possibly – world record holder.



THINK !
Firebird

Spectrum	£1.99 cs
C64	£1.99 cs
Amstrad	£1.99 cs

Ariolasoft originally released *Think!* at full price but it is now available from Firebird at a fraction of the cost. *Think!* is a horribly addictive game that is played on a 6 x 6 grid



in which you play against the computer or a friend and attempt to connect four counters, either horizontally, vertically or diagonally. A compelling puzzle that incorporates many additional features and skill levels.

WARHAWK
Firebird

C64	£1.99 cs

Snappy vertically-scrolling shoot-em-up in which you fly through the Asteroid belt destroying enemy bases while fending off the assault of hordes of alien spacecraft. As the metallic-looking alien base scrolls below you blow huge holes in its surface with rapid-firing lasers while under attack from all manner of ships raining down from the top of the screen.

WARLORD
Interceptor Software

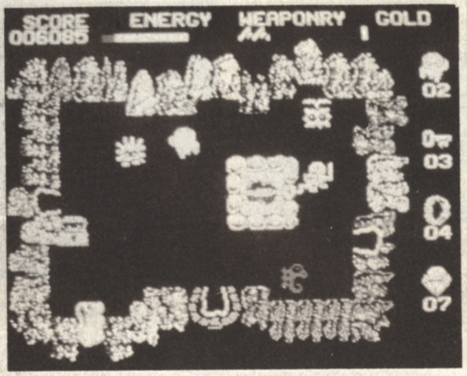
Spectrum	£1.99 cs
C64	£1.99 cs
Amstrad	£1.99 cs

A graphics and text adventure that first appeared at full price and is now a bargain as a budget game. You and a Roman soldier were transported back in time and you must race against him in an attempt to return to your own time. Warlord boasts some wonderful graphics and plenty of atmosphere and all the puzzles can be worked out logically. An adventure game that is suitable for beginners and experts alike.

WIZARD'S LAIR
Bubble Bus

C64	£1.99 cs
Spectrum	£1.99 cs
Amstrad	£1.99 cs

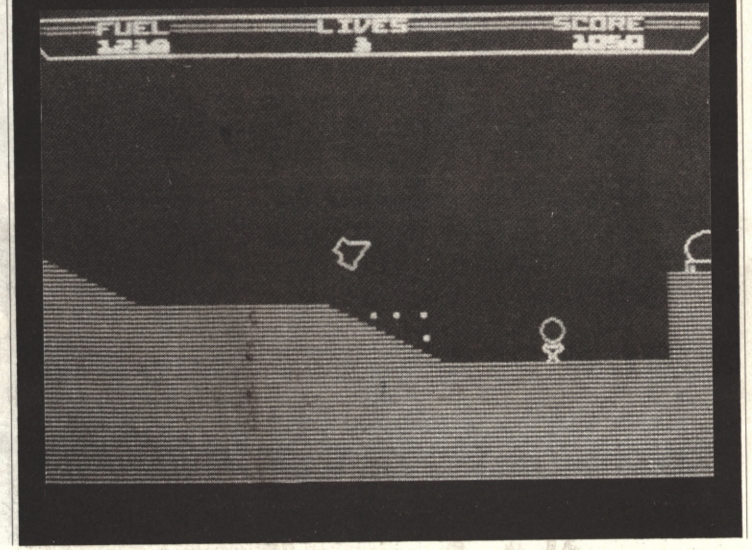
Massive – 256 room – arcade adventure with much mayhem and many objects to collect. It may be a bit too frantic for some, but if you like a big puzzle with lots of action this one-time full price game is well worth a gander.



THRUST
Firebird

C64	£1.99 cs
Amstrad	£1.99 cs
Spectrum	£1.99 cs

Send your small spaceship into the cavernous depths of the empire's storage planets to steal their Klystron pods. You must exercise precise control to resist the effects of inertia and gravity if you're to even reach the pod, but when you have it on your tow bar things become hell. The pod is heavier than your ship and one false move will have it swinging out of control; touch the walls and you're dead. Add all the other obstacles and you've got one hell of a game.



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Adventure through a complex and colourful Oriental world of magic, mysticism and intrigue.

Moebius – fabled deity of the island Kingdom of Khantun – has chosen you, his disciple, to reclaim the stolen Orb of Celestial Harmony from the renegade warlord.

Featuring superbly animated martial arts and sword-fighting combat, Moebius is far better than other Far Eastern adventures. Strategically and tactically more challenging, this odyssey takes you through the realms of Earth, Water, Air and Fire. The dynamic playfield changes constantly as you travel across 26 terrain types, encountering earthquakes, rockslides, heavy rains and heat waves. Graphics are top-notch and you can communicate with all the townspeople. There are 2 distinct magic systems, mixed combat modes and a fearsome array of enemies.

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The Black Belt
Of Martial Arts Games

ORIGIN SYSTEMS INC.

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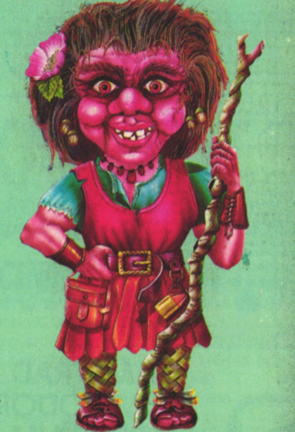
PILGRIM

This month the Pilgrim keeps you up to date with the first of many instalments of The Traveller's Times; introduces The White Wizard – an old friend from Personal Computer Games magazine; checks out *Maniac Mansions* from Activision/Lucasfilms; takes you by the hand through *Hitchhikers'*; and...well, you get the picture don't you? What more could you want except a rod and staff of your own?



Ingrid Bottomlow, Level 9's new managing director and star of their latest game, *Gnome Ranger*. The Pilg attempted to get a quote from her, but was told she was 'unavailable for comment'. Apparently she is now a very busy person, especially as she has been voted 'Miss Orchardshire'. Stand by for an interview with Ingrid in next month's column, together with exclusive details of what she REALLY thinks of the Austins.

The Traveller's Times

Edited by: The Pilgrim Honorary Editor: The White Wizard Published by: Far-Future Publishing
Price: Free with every copy of ACE

Level 9 Go It A-gnome

***Gnome Ranger*, Level 9's latest game, marks the return of the company to independent publishing. For the first time since *The Price of Magik*, the honourable Austins – Britain's oldest and best-established adventure family – are producing a game under their own label. What's more, it promises to be one of their most ambitious programs yet.**

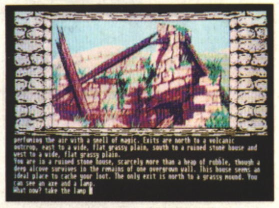
Gnome Ranger stars Ingrid Bottomlow, who must struggle home through upwards of 200 locations with text by the Austins and Peter McBride of *Knight Orc* infamy, after being teleported by a faulty scroll. The game falls into three parts and unlike *Knight Orc* it is not possible to move between them – each part must be completed in turn to finish the game.

The three different 'worlds' are dominated by 'vegetable, mineral, and animal puzzles', claims Pete Austin. 'The first involves potion mixing and finding the right ingredients; the 'mineral' world revolves largely around the war between the ice people and the fire people, in which Ingrid must intervene; the third features a yeti and many character puzzles.'

The game is 'played quite a lot for laughs', says Pete, 'and features more character-based problems of the kind introduced in *Knight Orc*. It features digitised pics on Amiga, ST, IBM, Mac, C64/128, and Amstrad disk. The game is also available for Spectrum, MSX, Atari 8-bit, and Apple computers. Price is £14.95 for 16-bit versions and 3 inch disk, £9.95 for others. Watch out for it as you read this, and look forward to an exhaustive review in next month's A.C.E.

The White Wizard says:
Should be interesting this. I wasn't overly impressed with *Knight Orc*. True, it was a fantastic system compared with the Austin's earlier games, but I felt the result was just a bit chaotic in terms of actual game-play. There were too many characters and I didn't find the plot (once I'd worked out what it was) all that gripping. Still, Level 9 have got the system right now – and if they're going back to publishing under their own label this could be a mighty important release for them.

One feature of interactive character games is that the puzzles can, if the authors' aren't careful, become extremely difficult. With the right design, however, they can work wonders for a game. At long last Level 9 have got it together not only on the character front but also on the graphics. Let's hope the game design in *Gnome Ranger* is as hot as the programming!



```
perfuming the air with a smell of magic. Exits are north to a volcanic
outcrop, east to a wide, flat grassy plain, south to a ruined stone house and
west to a wide, flat grassy plain.
You are in a ruined stone house, scarcely more than a heap of rubble, though a
deep alcove survives in the remains of one overgrown wall. This house seems an
ideal place to cache your loot. The only exit is north to a grassy mound. You
can see an axe and a lamp.
What now? take the lamp █
```

Old Times, Old Magic

Level 9 haven't broken up with Rainbird – far from it. This is a screen-shot from *Time and Magic*, the new compilation featuring *Lords of Time*, *Red Moon*, and the *Price of Magik*. Apart from the digitised pictures (not available on 8-bit cassette, Atari 8-bit, or Apple II versions) the games have not been enormously changed, unlike the upgrades applied to earlier compilations.

Lords of Time is the oldest of these titles, and both the Pilg and the White Wizard retain fond memories of its different time scenarios and attractively described locations. *Red Moon* marked the companies return to magic after the Silicon Dreams hi-tech scenarios – and *Price of Magik* continued the spell-casting renaissance.

Spiritual Guidance Launches Jack the Ripper

***Jack the Ripper* is on its way into the shops from St Brides via CRL, and courtesy of Gilsoft's *PAW*. This should make it one of the first *PAW*ed games to go on national release.**
The game is a three-parter set in 19th Century London with digitised graphics and maximum use made of the *PAW*'s advanced parsing capabilities. Available initially only for Spectrum, a Commodore version is planned for later this year.

Speaking for St Brides, Priscilla Langridge remarked that 'Somebody we hadn't met for quite some time – a clairvoyant – has a series of visions concerning the Ripper murders. The game is based on these visions, which suggest that the murders were carried out by an organisation that required, for its own dark purposes, to kill, and to kill publicly.'

The Pilg thinks this sounds rather creepy, but that won't stop him from reviewing the game. Watch this space – and don't go out after dark!

Get into TT!

We don't just print news about software houses in Taveller's Times. If you've come across something on your travels that others should know about, let us know – and we'll *hold the front page!*

ARMY MOVES
DINAMIC
RAMBO
FIRST BLOOD PART II
GREEN BERET
Konami
TOP GUN
GREAT ESCAPE

5 ALL-ACTION COMPUTER HITS
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ARMY MOVES
You are a member of the SOC (Special Operations Core) a crack regiment of Specialist Commandos picked for the most dangerous missions.
Locked in a safe at the emeny headquarters is information . . . information so vital that the turning point of the conflict depends upon its discovery. To get to the headquarters means crossing jungles and deserts, manipulating many forms of transportation and harnessing a variety of weapons systems.
Only the best will succeed on this deadly venture . . . Will you be one of them?
© Game Design Dinamic

RAMBO First Blood Part II
The game takes place in approximately 1 million sq. feet (scale) of jungle featuring the P.O.W. camp, a secret Temple and many different types of terrain. Colonel Trautman, your C.O. (Commanding Officer), has given you very precise orders . . . . Find the P.O.W. camp, photograph the evidence using the automatic camera which is part of your standard equipment and then make your way North to the extraction point where a helicopter awaits you. You will then be automatically flown back to the safety of your base in Thailand.
Your orders are specific:
"Do not engage the enemy"
"Do not attempt to rescue."
However when you arrive at the P.O.W. camp and see your former comrade Banks, tied to a Bamboo Cross in the compound you know that another scenario will unfold ; one in which you are the Hero! You must decide . . . Ignoring your C.O. and using the knife, you cut your buddy free — now there is no turning back as you have alerted the camp guards. Taking Banks with you, you battle your way North towards the helicopter in an attempt to get transport to free all the P.O.W.s.
Having located the chopper you must return to the camp to find the main body of prisoners — again using your knife to cut their bonds, hurry to get them aboard for by now there is a full alert and the enemy's main weapon, a powerful helicopter Gunship is sent in pursuit.
Now engage in combat with this fearsome machine and escape with the prisoners to the safety of Thailand.
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GREEN BERET
RESCUE THE CAPTIVES!
You are THE GREEN BERET, a highly trained combat machine. Your mission; infiltrate all four enemy Strategic Defence Installations — you are alone, against immeasurable odds, have you the skill and stamina to succeed?
© Konami

TOP GUN
The "TOP GUN" game puts you in the pilot's seat of an F-14 jet fighter. 3-D vector graphics and split screen display allow one or two players to combat head to head or against the computer. Your armaments in this nerve-tingling aerial duel are heat seeking missiles and 20mm rapid fire cannon. Many skills have to be brought in to play such as reflexes, manoeuvring ability and accuracy to become the best of the best. "Top Gun" mavericks enter the danger zone!
TOP GUN TM & © 1986, 1987 Paramount Pictures Corporation. All Rights Reserved.

THE GREAT ESCAPE
The year is 1942, the place Germany. War has broken out and you have been captured and placed in a high security P.O.W. camp. Victory may be far away, so it is your duty to escape, but this will not be easy. It will take careful planning and much patience, culminating in a skilful and resourceful implementation. In the camp you are closely guarded but while you follow the daily routine you will need to slip away unnoticed to reconnoitre the situation and collect tools and materials necessary for your chosen escape route. There are many avenues of escape, some difficult, all certainly dangerous and each one requiring different skills or equipment.
Game Design Copyright Denton Designs 1986

Screen shots taken from various computer formats

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MANIAC MANSION

Multi-character action graphics from **Activision.**

LAST month we checked out a game from Sierra On-Line that tried to give us that 'see-it-as-you-do-it' approach which adventurers are rumoured to be crying out for.

Games like *Heavy on the Magic* have been enormously popular, and ever since *Valhalla* the idea of having both animated action and text-entry has haunted programmers and players alike. *Maniac Mansion* offers you a large graphics screen, three animated characters (chosen by you from a cast of seven), and beneath it a selection of fifteen different commands that are selected by joystick.

Young Sandy has been plucked from the local college fraternity by the hideous Dr Fred and is being held prisoner in Maniac Mansion, a well-drawn set of interior locations with a surprising number of objects to find and use. There are also other characters in the game who will interact with you, ranging from Nurse Edna (who is apparently into bondage) and Dead Cousin Ted. True, the characterisation throughout the game is hideously American teen-trendy, but somehow it helps give the game an atmosphere slightly reminiscent of those numerous cult movies that always seem to involve campus life and psychopaths. This movie link is borne out during the game when you find items like the chainsaw, dangling on a hook in the kitchen and surrounded by bloody handprints.

At the start of the game you select which team-members you wish to play with. You have to have Dave (Sandy's boyfriend) but must choose two others according to their individual skills, which range from photography to physics. All the traditional campus characters are there, from the spotty scientist type to the blond haired beach-boy. Some choice!

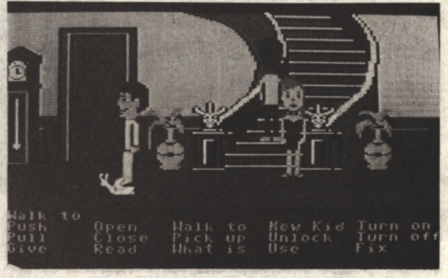
You then find yourself outside Maniac Mansion with your three characters. The sprites are very large and well-drawn and speak to each other (and to you) during the game, with a rather droll fluttering of the lips. The movement doesn't seem to bear any relationship to what they're saying but is nevertheless quite a nice touch.

You move them about by using the joystick to shift a cursor across the screen and clicking the firebutton, whereupon the default command WALK TO will be completed by, for example, the word FRONT DOOR if the cursor is positioned on that particular object.

You can control any one character at a time – this is the best bit of the program, because it enables you to plan strategy and explore different locations simultaneously. You change over by selecting NEW KID from the menu, and then clicking on one of the names displayed. You'll find co-operation between the characters essential as some get imprisoned or otherwise detained without hope of rescue unless another one can come up with a solution.

The range of commands is very limited, but you expect that in this sort of game, and the limitation is to some extent made up for by the intelligence of the program and the actions that the independent characters such as Nurse Edna get up to. Best of all, the on-screen animation is swift and smooth so you don't have to wait around for ages for the sprites to get their act together. In fact, for this sort of game, the program plays very smoothly and this certainly adds to the enjoyment.

As usual, traditional adventurers won't get much out of this sort of fare, but the Pilg really quite enjoyed the game. The multi-character element makes a lot of difference and although there isn't much text there is quite enough to see and do to keep you occupied. Activision are bringing out more stuff from Lucasfilms – if it's as good as this then I for one am looking forward to it.



RELEASE BOX		
C64/128	£14.99dk	REVIEWED
Apple II	£14.99dk	OUT NOW
No other versions planned		

SYSTEM ■■■■■▨▨
Multi-characters and smooth game-play
ENCOUNTERS ■■■■■▨▨
Little interaction, but lots of sub-plots involving others
CHALLENGE ■■■■▨▨▨
Puzzles fairly easy, but very varied
LANDSCAPE ■■■■■■▨
Amusing to watch – and attractive too

VERDICT 820
One of the better pics'n'action games on the market

KARYSSIA

GAC three-parter from **Incentive.**

INCENTIVE (as you can also see on the next page) have always lived up to their word when it comes to supporting GAC users. There has been a long string of releases from the company featuring games written by users and one or two of them have been quite attractive.

However for the most part these games have been really quite simple affairs from the programming point of view – the GAC is rather limiting, to be sure, but as Pat Winstanley will tell you there is still quite a lot you can do with it.

Karyssia is a three-part game with simple combat routines (that depend on your skill and experience levels), very rudimentary speech routines, and an attractive character set. The graphics have that isometric Ultimate look as far as layout is concerned but are otherwise rather devoid of detail – a pity because the rest of the game is nicely put together,

Your task is to travel to the Royal Castle, enter it, and kill Karyssia who is mismanageing the economy of Senduarin and generally causing heart-ache and encouraging homicidal tendencies.

This is certainly one of the better GAC games released by Incentive. The puzzles are quite tough in paces, but are to a certain extent spoilt by the frequent 'You can't do that' messages that even greet the simple word LOOK (you have to use REDESCRIBE). But just occasionally the program comes up with a neat little bit of interaction that compensates for these weaknesses. My only oher complaint is about the frequent inevitable deaths, so SAVE often.

RELEASE BOX		
Spectrum	£7.95cs	REVIEWED
No other versions planned		

SYSTEM ■■■■▨▨▨
Good use of GAC, despite the system's limitations
ENCOUNTERS ■■■▨▨▨▨
Simple interaction occasionally, but nothing else
CHALLENGE ■■■■▨▨▨
Easy to make steady progress – three parts to finish
LANDSCAPE ■■■■▨▨▨
Not bad considering GAC limitations

VERDICT 695
Not bad for GAC, but £7.95 is a bit steep

Pat's Patch

Combat routines using GAC

Setting up a fight using *GAC* is simple. All you need is to set aside a group of counters to store the various fighting attributes of the player and his opponent, then manipulate these during combat to generate a result. For this example I have set up three different types of attribute for each combatant:

1) SKILL .... This is set at the start of the game and does not change (although you could add the refinement of increasing skill according to the player's experiences).
2) STAMINA .... This is also set initially, but is reduced during unsuccessful combat (again, you could vary it with eating, potions, etc).
3) LUCK .... A vital ingredient of any fight, this varies with every round of combat, being newly generated each time.

Each attribute is set up for both the player and opponent, then stored in counters. When a fight sequence is entered, luck for the round is generated, then the three attributes are totalled for each combatant. The totals are then compared, the combatant with the lower total has his stamina reduced, and a message is printed to say who has been hit. If both the totals are the same, neither combatant's stamina is reduced, and again a message is printed to say what has happened.

The player is then given the option of further fighting or retreat. If he chooses to fight, the sequence is repeated with the new stamina levels and freshly generated luck values. If either the player or the opponent reach zero stamina they are classified as dead.

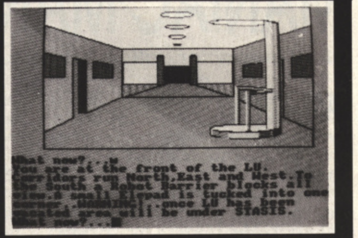
In the code (see box), counters are allocated as follows:

1. Player's skill
2. Player's stamina
3. Player's luck
4. Player's total
5. Opponent's skill
6. Opponent's stamina
7. Opponent's luck
8. Opponent's total

Combat code in GAC

```
INITIALISE:
RAND 5 CSET 1 RAND 5 CSET 5 RAND 10 CSET 2 RAND 10 CSET 6 END

START SEQUENCE:
IF ( HERE opponent ) RESE 10 MESS 'fight or run? WAIT END
IF ( VERB run ) go to another location .... etc
IF ( VERB fight ) SET 10 END

GENERATE LUCK:
IF ( SET? 10 ) RAND 5 CSET 3 RAND 5 CSET 7 END

TOTAL ATTRIBUTES:
IF ( SET? 10 ) CTR 1 + CTR 2 + CTR 3 CSET 4 CTR 5 + CTR 6 + CTR 7 CSET 8 END

COMPARE TOTALS:
1) IF ( CTR 4 > CTR 8 AND SET? 10 ) DECR 6 MESS 'you hit him' END
2) IF ( CTR 4 < CTR 8 AND SET? 10 ) DECR 2 MESS 'he hit you' END
3) IF ( CTR 4 = CTR 8 AND SET? 10 ) MESS 'you ducked and he dodged – no hit!' END
4) IF ( CTR 4 = 0 AND SET? 10 ) MESS 'you're dead' EXIT END
5) IF ( CTR 8 = 0 AND SET? 10 ) MESS 'he's dead' RESE 10 WAIT END
```

Double again from Incentive...



```
What now?...w
You are at the front of the LU.
Corridors run North,East and West.To
the South a Robot Barrier blocks all
view.A small Elepad is tucked into one
corner..WARNING!..once LU has been
vacated area will be under STASIS.
What now?...■
```

GAC software house Incentive have maintained a policy of supporting games produced using the system .Recently the company have been releasing two games on a single cassette under the title Double Gold at £7.95 and the latest combo is *Nova/Haunted House*, written by Jem Wyer and Jason Twigg respectively.

Nova is set in a wrecked space-station. Not, therefore a tremendously original scenario, but despite this it manages to generate enough interest to keep the player at the keyboard and has one or two very attractive pics. One thing that the Pilg found particularly effective was the use of shading to give a futuristic metallic sheen to some of the locations. *Haunted House* is a bit more run-of-the-mill and the graphics aren't as good either. Furthermore, both games still have some minor rough edges – spelling mistakes, poorly formatted text and so on – which is sad to see on a commercial release. Still, it's good to see Incentive supporting us DIY programmers. Stand by for news of the Automata label (using GAC products almost exclusively) in a future issue.

and Pat's Post...

Dear Pat,

I would like to inform you of a bug which I have found in Incentive's GAC for the Spectrum. It's not the old 'Jah Brendan' bug of which I am sure you have heard, it's something far worse and could destroy your whole adventure as it did mine, The bug can take many forms but here is the simplest. First of all load up GAC and then the Quickstart file, enter room number one as 'a cave' or anything you like, enter a high priority condition (something like **IF (AT 1) EXIT END**), go back to the main menu and press ENTER to start the game. You should now find that the program has locked itself in a loop and it is impossible to get back to the main menu.

Apart from these bugs I have managed to get on well with GAC. At the start I just messed about on it writing simple adventures, but I did manage to write a good one called *Alien Complex*. I sent it to Firebird Silver and received a reply in a couple of months. They said the game was nicely presented but there were few tough problems and the scenario wasn't that original. I then sent it to Players and at the moment I'm waiting for a reply. I've started up a new adventure called *Deadly Rebel* set on three different planets. It's going to have three multi-loads, each requiring a certain password. I'm thinking of sending it to CRL but I haven't a clue what their address is and I would be very grateful if you could print it.

Yours sincerely,
Darryl Sloan, Portadown

As far as the famous 'Jah Brendan' bug is concerned, I've luckily not been troubled by it (so far!), but yes, I have heard of it. Doesn't it crash the machine and print up the name on screen or something? I'd be interested to hear from other readers about this and other 'features' of adventure writing utilities.

As far as your own 'bug' is concerned, I'm not surprised the computer is hanging up! You're effectively killing off the player as soon as he enters location 1 and then cycling back to the beginning of the game. I doubt if you'll even get the What now? prompt. Your problem is with the word EXIT, which is processed almost immediately, kills the player, and sends you back to square one. Remove that and your problem is solved. CRL's address is Unit 7D, Kings Yard, Carpenters Road, London E15.

Dear Pat,

I am writing a Christian game and want to do an unusual swear routine.

I want to leave a message such as 'Press any key for a nasty surprise', then somehow make the computer reset – i.e. completely wipe the memory. This would force a reload and put a stop to any bad language (good eh!?).

How do I do it?
John Pritchard, Preston

Interesting problem, John, and I'll check it out for next month. There were a few commercial games around that pulled this sort of trick – the cleverest ones simply displayed the boot-up screen, making you THINK the computer had reset, then waited for a key-press to return the player to the game. of course some did reset the computer – and not always intentionally, either!

Letter from the SHADE...

***Sappho the Witch* keeps readers informed on the latest developments in SHADES, a multi-user game run under Micronet that allows you to log on with your modem and frolic around an imaginary land in the company of other real-life adventurers. Naturally, everyone plays under an assumed name – considering the sort of thing you can do to your fellow players, this anonymity isn't just convenient – it's essential!**

Once again fighting hits the SHADES headlines. Killing has always been a part of MUG's, but in SHADES fighting has taken on a new angle with the growth of a sub-breed of player: the high-level psychopath.

These fighters (Enchanter-ess level and above) are a curiosity. It's relatively easy to be a killer Gallant, the points required to get to that level can be obtained within a single game. Gaining 30K plus, however, takes several resets, skill, and determination. Thus they have much to lose if they die.

High-level killers are not an entirely new concept. Back in the annals of SHADES history, Carabak was the first killer to achieve notoriety and respect with his killer Necromancer. In those days, if you couldn't fight there was only one thing to do with Carabak around – RUN!

More and more killers now climb to a similar level. As their level grows, spell ability improves, along with small increases in stamina and bare-hand strength. All make quite a difference in closely-run fights.

Recently 'high level duels' ahve caught the imagination of many Shadists. The duellists lay claim to glory and many points if they win such highly publicised events. The stakes are very high – and only one can walk out alive.

Three 'high-level' duels have been highlighted recently: these were all between a particularly well-heeled killer known as Winseer the Longsword Man. Winseer, a veteran Shadist, and the first killer to follow Carabak to Necromancer status, will 'duel' any player of similar level.

Fingers the Warlock was the first to challenge Winseer to a duel to the death. At a level where a paltry 352 points were needed to attain Immortality, the sanity of the challenge was frequently questioned. Yet, for Fingers the potential glory of killing Winseer to gain immortality was too much. Despite his high level advantage, Fingers lost; stripped of rank, he left the game points-less – a mere novice.

Palatan and Lonewold soon followed suit...No-one has challenged him since.

Is the guy invincible? Can such high-level killers die? The answer - yes! Just a few days ago at the time of writing, Winseer's Warlock was splattered all over the City by Delieu the Soothsayer. Was Winseer low on stamina? No! Was he unarmed? No! He was so busy mooning over a SHADES 'lady-friend' that he didn't notice a longsword being wrapped around his head!

Before I go, the rumours of Qadile the Wizard being 'noviced' by Winseer are untrue. Qadile was, in fact, a victim of the Winchester. But if these Wizards WILL insist on having such steamy EMOTEing sessions, then they will have to expect the odd corrupted persona file or three....

Did the persona file corrupt for you too, darling?!

A word of introduction...

Welcome to the column where the curious, the involved, the Shadists-to-be, and the Shadists-that-were, can check up on the latest gossip from a world where anything can – and does – happen, and where the players are not computer controlled creations, but real people....

Let me introduce myself. I'm Sappho the Witch, an old character who has been 'Shading' since the game first opened on Micronet just over a year ago. Since then I've played all sorts of games, but SHADES remains my favourite. Like other Mutli-User Games (MUGs), it is a place where several adventurers can play in the same game at once. SHADES, for example, has sixteen games (known as landscapes) of eight players, so there is plenty of room for everyone.

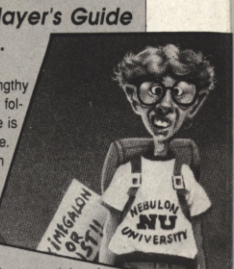
Most MUGs revolve around reaching the rank of Wizard or attaining Immortality. To get to the rank of Wizard or Witch in Shades you need to gather 200000 points. This is no mean feat!

SHADES is therefore a place where weedy wimps can become macho he-men, wielding swords, hacking and slaying. Or perhaps they feel the need to act as Gallants, protecting the women, or ridding the Shade of other macho swordsmen. Women can play as attractive damsels, always seeking some brave hero who will come along and save them from the horrors of a land of violence and danger. Or there are petite and dainty women who become fearless amazons (left breast intact) fighting their way through an inhospitable land, hacking at all and sundry.

SHADES is also a place where men, women, boys, girls, the young and the old, can even change their sex – and often do!

Meanwhile, if you've got any gossip for this column, just leave a note for me on MBX 223681485 or BT Gold 74:MIK800.

The Pilgrim's *Player's Guide* to Hitchhikers...



HHGTTG is a fairly lengthy experience, and Pilgrim followers will know that he is always short of space. We've decided to run the Player's Guide to the game over three issues. In this issue, you make it to the **Heart of Gold,** next month you'll deal with the essential problems of **tea** and **alternative universes**, finishing up in the Christmas issue with the infamous **screening door** problem and the end of the game.

Hitchhiker's was Douglas Adam's first adventure with Infocom, and it shows. First, the game is very linear at the beginning, which means that in several instances all you have to do is WAIT repeatedly – so type **Z** instead of **WAIT** to save time here and throughout the game.

Another slightly aggravating feature (though some of you might love it) is that you have to solve a lot of problems in advance, as it were. Typical examples of this are the **yapping dog,** (who must be fed a cheese sandwich, bought in the pub) and the **Vogon poetry** which provides the password to get the Atomic Vector Plotter. In the latter case, however, at least you get told what you need by pressing the switch near the glass case in the Vogon hold.

Other puzzles are more straightforward – you can just **stop bulldozer** if it's causing a problem (it will) without bothering to type 'lie-down-in-front-of-it'. When Ford turns up, just **Z** until he offers you the towel – but **don't** take it. Keep **Z-**ing until you get up (which you do automatically) then **Follow Ford** until you reach the pub, where you should limit your drinking to a reasonable amount. You should, by the way, have brought absolutely everything with you from your home, including the junk mail.

Once you're in the Vogon hold, and have recovered consciousness, you'll need to get the **Babelfish** from the dispenser as quickly as possible. Remove your gown and hang it on the hook (you should have worn it from the start), wait till Ford falls asleep and then get the towel and the satchel. The towel goes over the drain and the satchel against the panel. The junk mail (you **did** remember that, didn't you?) goes on top of the satchel.

If you don't **enjoy poetry** you won't have the pleasure of hearing the second Vogon poem, which contains the password needed to get the Atomic Vector Plotter. Once you've got the password, you may still have difficulty – you need to **TYPE "password"** to open the case. Then make sure you get everything before you get thrown into the airlock.

It's really at this point that the adventure begins. Let's face it, up till now you haven't exactly had to do much exploring, have you? Next month we'll make our way through various universes, examine the use of the **thing** and the importance of the **seat cushion fluff.**

No Problem!

Let's face it, things are looking tough. That Balrog up ahead has got a hungry look, the oil in your lamp is running low, your sword has been magically turned into an orange lolly, your foot is stuck in the unrelenting grip of a giant clam, and there's a large bulldozer – driven by a rabid hobbit – about to flatten you. Do you light a Hamlet cigar? No, you just tap RAMSAVE with a nonchalant air, and turn with a sigh of supreme contentment to the Pilg's *No Problem!* column. Let's face it, this column is what seemingly insoluble problems were made for!

Mordon's Quest
You'll need the blanket, torch, and transporter before leaving the house area.
The king of the jungle could possibly be french.
Break pyrites into small pieces to get them back along the narrow crawl.
Octopusses hate light.
You'll need a bit of puff to kill the pygmy.

Kentilla
At the river, swing across.
Rescue Timandra from the Marshzats and return her to Zelda for a lift.
Examine the large Urga-Maul more than once.

Heroes of Karn
Beren can kill the bat with the falcon
Khadim can kill the Pirate with the dagger.
Oil the chest before opening it.
The Vampire can be killed with a cross.
The Witch doesn't like water.
Istar can kill the spirit with the wand.

The Boggit
Stay out of the living room until the chocs have exploded.
Use your knowledge of the calendar to enter combination.
Lux softens the toughest troll.
Check out the Goblin's cauldron.

Seabase Delta
Blow bubbles to wake hen.
Use fork to create short-circuit.

Return to Eden
Drop the radsuit if animals attack you.
Foxgloves can be worn to get the cold leaf, which freezes the quagmire.

Adventure Quest
The Vamp doesn't like onions.

Price of Magik
The cold room.the brass monkey...need I say more?

Dungeon Adventure
No prizes for guessing where the needle is...search the haystack.
Coldcream helps you with the fire elemental.

Red Moon
OBIS opens the sarcophagus, OLLABIN turns the mummy to dust.

Lords of Time
Can't get the keys from the shed? Try giving the narcissus a glimpse of itself, then wave something to attract the keys.
You need to spot the tooth fairy, but mushrooms help.

Snowball
Use the spray to blind the Waldroid.
The cat can help you pass the slippery bit.

Lurking Horror
Cook the takeaway and give it to the hacker to get master-key.
Use the forklift truck to clear another exit.

Bureaucracy
To enter the Paranoid's house, wait in the burgled house until the weirdo arrives, then give him the same message you received via the loudspeaker outside the Paranoid's gate. He will then respond with the phrase that you should use outside the gate to open it.
In the Paranoid's house, let the weirdo go upstairs first and then follow him – but wait a little or you'll be killed.

Guild of Thieves
You can enter the windmill simply by shouting out to the miller 'STOP WINDMILL'.
Buy the lute off the miller with the proceeds from the rat-race.
PULL PIPE to drown rats – but turn off drainage system before water level gets too high.

Colossal Adventure
Can't get the nugget up the stairs, try going down the plugh.

You can help...

If you're still alive....If you've triumphed over adversity...If you've fought the good fight, and are still breathing...Wherever you are, whatever world you're journeying in, we need your help. There are thousands of lost souls, trapped in locations from which there seems to be no escape, confronted by opponent's who simply will NOT spare their pitiful lives, who are **crying out** for the answers to problems that YOU can give them.

So, if you've cracked a tough game, if you've got a map that can show us where to go, even if you've just got a few tips for fellow players, send them in to the Pilg's No Problem! page. By doing so you not only get to see your name in print, but also have the satisfaction of knowing that someone, somewhere, owes their survival in that game to you.

Write to No Problem!, c/o The Pilg, 4 Queen Street, BATH, BA1 1EJ. Let's hear from you now...before it's too late!

Contacting the Pilg

The Pilgrim welcomes correspondence on all aspects of adventuring. You can contact him either by writing to ACE at 4 Queen Street, BATH, BA1 1EJ, or by modem on BT Gold 83:JNL251. Messages for the White Wizard will be passed on if clearly marked for his attention.

Pilgrim's Post

Floating Bug

I have been playing Guild of Thieves on my Atari 520 STM and believe there is a bug in the game. I have crossed the hot coals but find that I can get back again by typing 'SING URFANORE PENDRA' again, even though the lute had disintegrated on the first crossing. In fact I have found that by singing the phrase in any location you can get the same effect and each time you are told that the lute 'disintegrates'.

I would be interested to learn if you have come across this – is it a bug?
David Powell, Lancing

Yes, it does look suspiciously like a mior bugette. As you point out elsewhere in your letter, there is in fact another way to return across the hot coals (see last month) – you need to have a knowledge of succulents). This latter method is obviously the solution the programmer's intended you to use. However, the feature you mention is also in my version, so there seems little point in trying your hand at firewalking if you can simply float back again.

Boring...

Could you please tell me why there is no interest level for adventure reviews. It is a great idea and adventures are sometimes boring as well as arcades. Keep up the good work...
J Hill, Westbridge

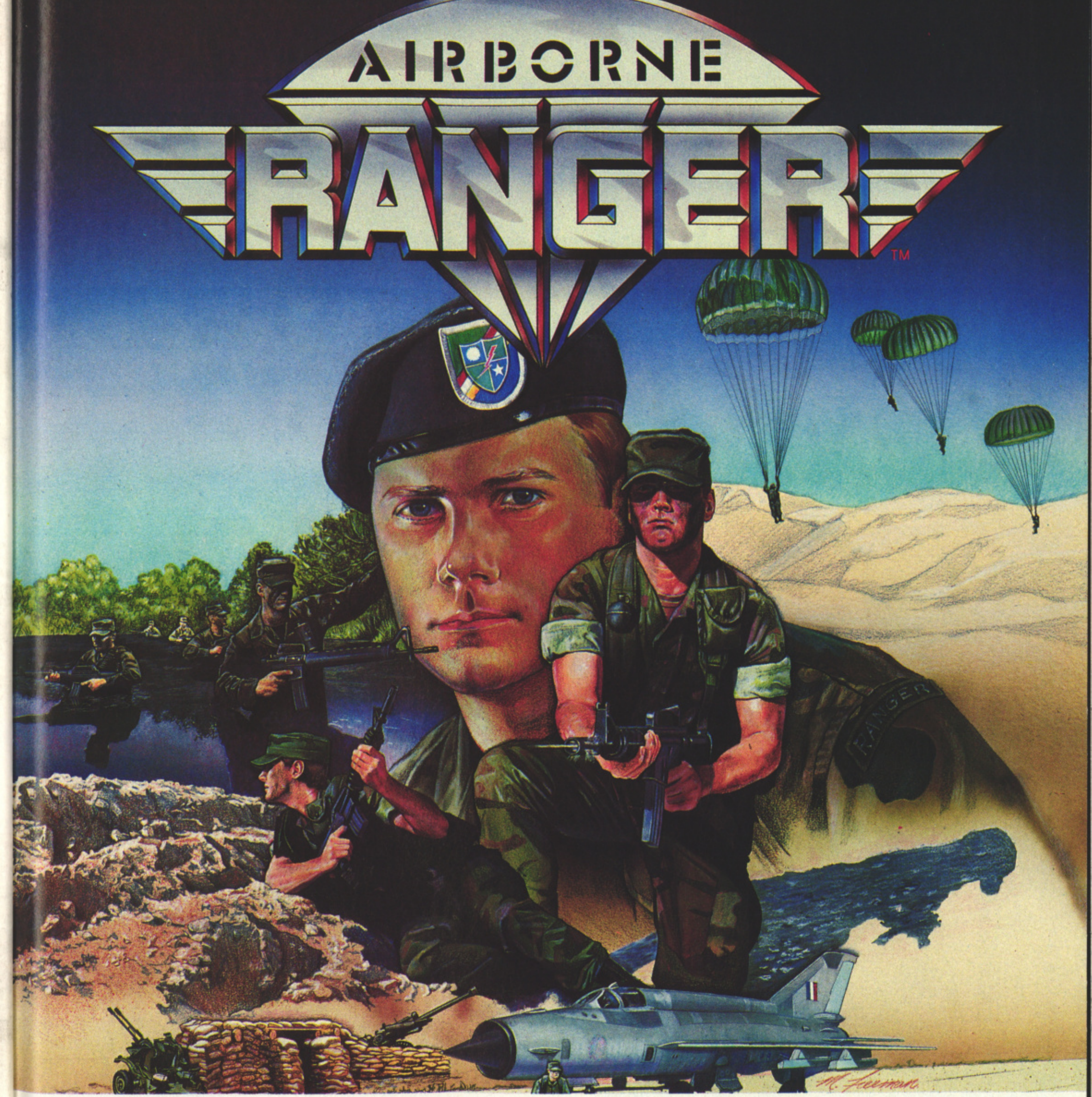
There's no point in having a PIC curve for adventures because the curve would plummet to zero as soon as you finished the game. The time this takes depends far more on individual skill than it does with arcade games. What really counts in adventures is the atmosphere, the parsing system, and possibilities of interaction – hence the ratings used by the Pilg. I do however always welcome suggestions on how these ratings can be improved...

Jailbird

I have a brilliant adventure game called Robin of Sherwood, but don't know how to get out of jail at the beginning of the game, so if you know can you tell me?
R. Teesdale, York

Since the jail location is actually the *first* location, fellow Pilg, I'm touched by your faith in the game being a 'brilliant' one – you can't have seen much of it yet! You get out of the jail by climbing on the shoulders of your fellow prisoners, grabbing the guards ankles, and then strangling him. Rather a violent beginning to a game, the Pilg thought when he first played it. Actually, of all Adventuresoft's products, this one was one of the better ones.

THE ACTION—SIMULATION



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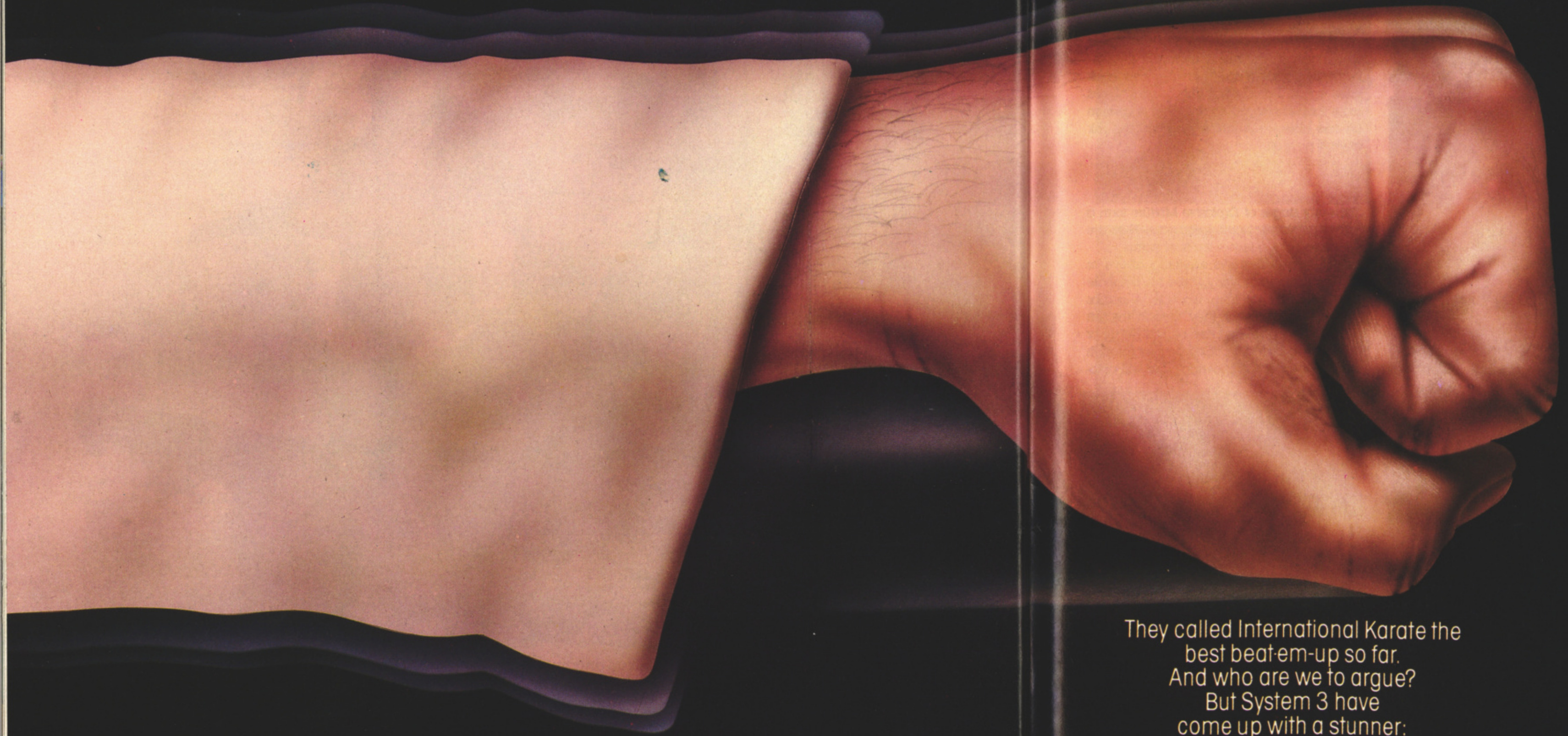

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SYSTEM 3

TRICKS 'N' TACTICS

EXPLORE *XOR*

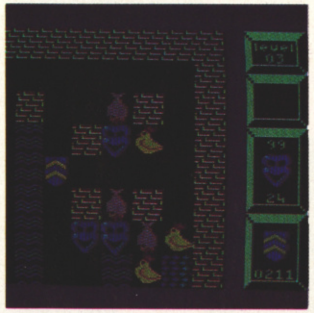
The Big Boffin himself, Andy Wilton, gives a little needful advice to players of XOR, the maniacal puzzler from Logotron, playing now on AMSTRAD, SPECTRUM and C64. XOR rated maximum IQ Factor in our first issue; you'll need all the help you can get.

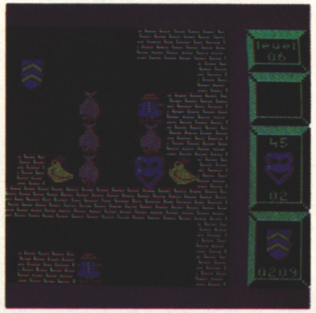
Chicken Supreme

Mostly straightforward stuff: chickens run left and fish fall down, as any fule kno. One point worth noting carefully is what happens when you take a mask which has both a chicken *and* a fish pushing against it.

On this *Chicken Supreme* screen you'll find it's quite safe to take the top mask and then move down. The chicken runs across in front of the fish and blocks its path, thus saving you from a nasty "Whoops". Why does the chicken beat the fish to it? Are chickens simply faster?

Well, no they aren't. In the *Doll's House* screen here, it's the other way round: the fish beats the chicken to it, saving your neck once again. How come? The answer seems to be that where you have to take a chance on one object outrunning another, the risk always pays off.





Explosive Mixture

The early stages of *Explosive Mixture* form a tutorial in simple bomb behaviour. Here are the basics, plus a few of the finer points.

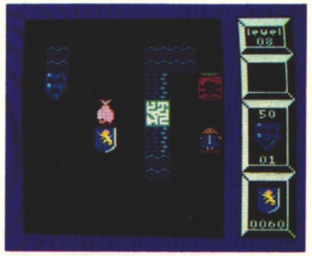
A V-Bomb destroys anything above or below it, plus whatever you used to detonate it if that came in from the side. V-bombs behave like chickens: they slide to the left wherever possible, and can be pushed up or down. They can slide or be pushed through forcefields (direction allowing!) and will detonate any other bombs they slide into.

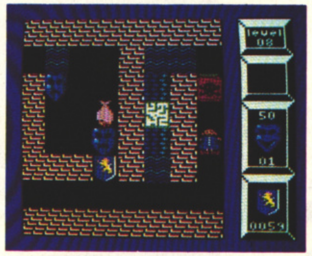
H-bombs are to fish as V-bombs are to chickens: they fall down wherever possible, and can be pushed left or right. They destroy whatever's on their immediate left and right, plus the object you detonated it with.

You can only set bombs off using things that move of their own accord: fish, chickens and bombs, in other words. If you use one bomb to detonate another, only the bomb that gets hit – the lower or left-hand one – actually explodes. The other one gets destroyed, but isn't detonated.

Enlightenment

The frowning masks are actually switches: pick one up and the room backgrounds go jet black, collect another and the lights come on again. Switches don't count as part of the mask total, and don't show up on the map.





Often you'll find switches blocking your path so that you have to pick them up. You'll also find them sometimes in the blast zones of bombs, with much the same end result: blowing a switch up has the same effect as collecting it. One useful tactic when you meet this kind of set-up is to find a switch with your other shield. You can then collect, swap shields and collect again, leaving the lights on afterwards.

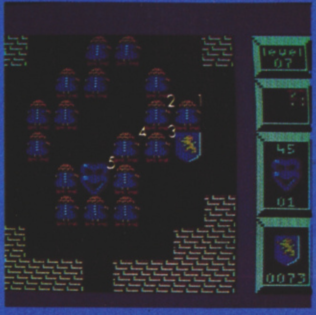
The Doll's House

Dolls don't move of their own accord, but you can push them around using your shields. Once a dolly starts moving, it keeps going until it hits an obstacle. Dollies can't detonate bombs or pass through forcefields, and won't move any objects that they hit. You can safely push a dolly so that it hits your other shield, and indeed many of the *Doll's House* problems rely on shuffling dolls back and forth between your shields.

Dolly's Revenge

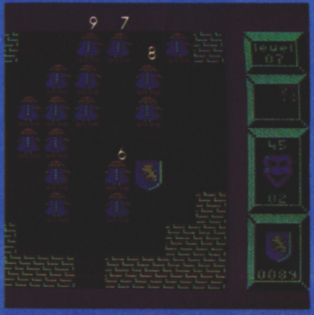
Just getting your shields out of their starting rooms will tax your brain enough here, but that's nothing compared to the problems that follow. The enormous set piece solved here – 17 dolls, one mask and no margin for error – is particularly nasty.

Getting that mask in the middle is pretty easy, but that's not enough: you've also got to push at least eight of the dolls through the narrow lower door of the room and onto the screen below. You're bound to push one doll into a corner and leave another seven immobile just getting the mask, so all but one of the remainder will have to go. Can't be done?



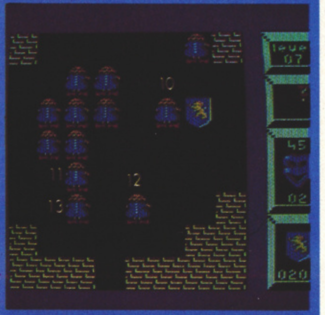
Getting the mask

1 Push this doll up
2 Push this doll left
3 Up
4 Left
5 Take mask, and then push down



Hitting your stride

6 Push this dolly left and then down
7 Down, left and down again
8 Left, down, left and down
9 Right, down and then as for 8

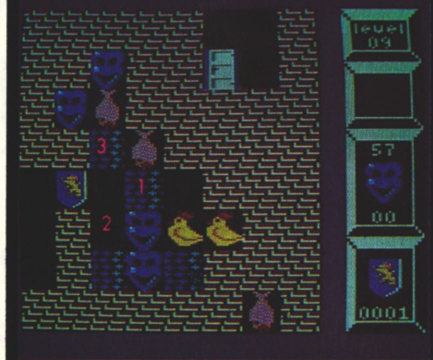


Finishing touches

10 Left and down
11 Right and down
12 Left and down
13 Up, right and down

The Challenge

This one starts off tough and doesn't let up at all. Here's one of the first problems on the level, and although it's made up of simple elements – chickens, fish, masks and forcefields – it really is tricky. You must get all the masks, you can't get your other shield in to help, and you'll trap yourself if you push any chickens or fish off the left edge. The solution here comes courtesy of Amstrad Action's Bob Wade.

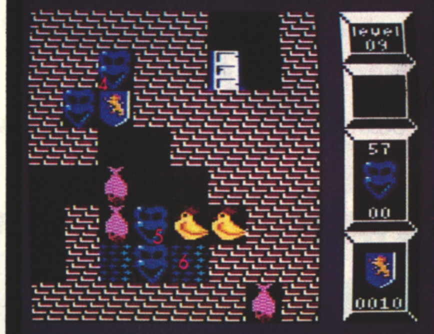


Freeing the fish

1 Push through forcefield and keep going

2 Push fish left so it falls into here

3 Remove this forcefield, so second fish drops

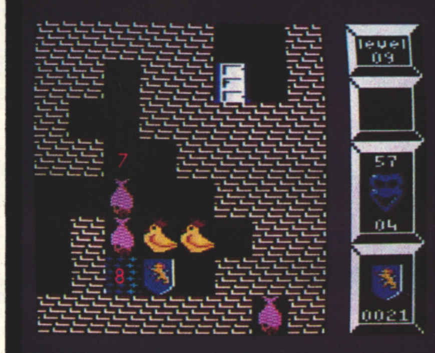


The masks

4 Take top two masks

5 Take bottom two masks

6 Remove this forcefield



The crucial part

7 Push LEFT-hand chicken up to here

8 Remove remaining forcefield the fish fall and the exit is clear

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DEATHWISH 3

Spectrum version

Type in the listing (but NOT what's in the brackets, which is for information only) and **RUN** it. Then start the game tape from the beginning and you should be blessed with infinite ammunition and be able to withstand vast amounts of injury.

```
10 REM DEATHWISH 3 POKES
20 REM BY C.WILD & S. HUNTER
30 REM ACE. NOV 87
40 CLEAR 32767
50 LOAD""CODE
60 LET ADD=33117
70 READ N
80 IF N=999 THEN GOTO 110
90 POKE ADD,N:LET ADD=ADD+1
100 GOTO 70
110 RANDOMIZE USR 32768
120 DATA 205,86,5,62,183
130 DATA 50,22,151,50,185,153 (for infi-
nite ammo)
140 DATA 50,37,169 (for infinite injury)
150 DATA 201,87,73,90,999
```

If you have a Multiface 1 or similar device then these pokes will produce the same effects.

```
POKE 38678,183  POKE 39353,183 (for
inifinite ammo)
POKE 43301,183 (for infinite injury)
```

CHRIS WILD, Shaw, Lancashire

PAPER-BOY

We promised some cheats for *Paperboy* in last issue so here goes.
For unlimited lives on the C64 type in and RUN this listing then load as normal.

```
10 FOR A=0 TO 28:READ B:POKE
20100+A,B:NEXT A
20 DATA 169,4,141,49,8,185,149,78,153,52
30 DATA 4,136,208,247,76,13,8,169,96,141
40 DATA 166,41,141,107,40,76,52,8,0
```

EDIZ and ROBERT, London

If you want to be invincible on the Spectrum version type and run this then start the tape.

```
10 CLEAR 65535
20 LOAD""CODE
30 FOR A=32000 TO 32024:READ B:POKE
A,B:NEXT A
40 DATA
33,22,255,34,86,254,229,33,19,125
50 DATA 209,1,6,0,237,176,195,232,253
60 DATA 50,151,187,195,86,5
70 RANDOMIZE USR 32000
```

T.L.MENSAH, Halewood

For all you Amstrad users out there here's a short program for infinite papers and invincibility. Just type in and run before loading the game.

```
10 OPENOUT"d"
20 MEMORY &2FF
30 LOAD "elite",&300
40 POKE &37E,&C9:CALL &300
60 POKE &1A14,&C9:POKE &1907,0
70 CALL &BF00
```

TONY HOYLE, St Annes

LEADER BOARD

Course 1

HOLE1=1W,PW,PT 2=3W,1I,PT 3=8I,PT
4=1W,8I,PT 5=3W,1I,PT 6=5I,PT 7=4I,PT
8=1W,7I,PT 9=1W,7I,PT 10=1W,PW,PT
11=9I,PT 12=1W,PW,PT 13=1W,8I,PT
14=1W,PW,PT 15=1W,6I,PT 16=7I,PT
17=1W,51,PT 18=1W,8I,PT

Course 2

HOLE1=1W,9I,PT 2=7I,PT 3=2I,1W,PT
4=6I,8I,PT 5=1W,7I,PT 6=3I,PT 7=1W,8I,PT
8=1W,3I,PT 9=1W,6I,PT 10=3I,9I,PT 11=9I,PT
12=1W,7I,PT 13=5W,PT 14=1W,8I,PT
15=1W,2I,PT 16=1W,2I,PT 17=1W,PW,PT
18=2I,1W,PW,PT

Course 3

HOLE1=5W,PT 2=1W,9I,PT 3=6I,1W,PT
4=1W,5I,PT 5=2I,9I,PT 6=PW,PT 7=2I,9I,PT
8=1W,PW,PT 9=1W,2I,PT 10=1W,PW,PT
11=1W,7I,PT 12=1W,7I,PT 13=1W,3I,PT
14=2I,5I,PT 15=3I,PT 16=1W,8I,PT
17=1W,5I,PT 18=1W,6I,PT

Course 4

HOLE1=2I,1W,PT 2=2I,PT 3=2I,8I,PT
4=1W,9I,PT 5=3I,9I,PT 6=1W,2I,PT 7=1W,6I,PT
8=1I,PW,PT 9=6I,PT 10=1W,PW,PT
11=1W,3I,PT 12=1W,3I,PT 13=1W,9I,PT
14=1W,PW,PT 15=3W,PT 16=3W,PT
17=1W,PW,PT 18=1W,4I,PT

That's it, so get Golfing.

DAVID MAREK, Edinburgh

HADES NEBULA

Do you want infinite lives on ST *Hades Nebula* ?.. then get to the high-score table, input your name as " MONITOR."and there you have it.

RICHARD MABLETHORPE, Grimsby

DRILLER

IN THE NEW DIMENSION

MOTOS

Spectrum version

```
10 REM MOTOS POKE
20 REM BY C.WILD & S.HUNTER
30 REM ACE. NOV 87
40 INK 0:PAPER 0
50 CLEAR 24575
60 LOAD""SCREEN$
70 PRINT AT 0,0;
80 LOAD""CODE
90 POKE 42241,0
100 RANDOMIZE USR 32768
```

You should now be graced with infinite lives. Multiface 1 owners should try POKEing 42241,0.

CHRIS WILD, Shaw, Lancashire

EXOLON

Spectrum version

```
10 REM EXOLON POKE
20 REM BY C.WILD & S.HUNTER
30 REM ACE. NOV 87
40 CLEAR 25999
50 LOAD""CODE
60 LET ADD=23296
70 READ N
80 IF N=999 THEN GOTO 110
90 POKE ADD,N:LET ADD=ADD+1
100 GOTO 70
110 RANDOMIZE USR 23296
120 DATA 62,125,50,19,252
130 DATA 205,0,252,62,15,50
140 DATA 88,254,195,58,254,175
150 DATA 50,110,131 (infinite ammo)
160 DATA 50,80,146  (infinite grenades)
170 DATA 50,29,157  (infinite lives)
180 DATA 62,201
190 DATA 50,179,156 (INVINCIBLE)
200 DATA 195,96,109,87,73,90,999
```

Multiface 1'ers should try :POKE 33646,0 *(INFINITE AMMO)*: POKE 37456,0 *(INFINITE GRENADES)*:POKE 40221,0 *(INFINITE LIVES)*:POKE 40115,201 *(INVINCIBILITY)*

CHRIS WILD, Shaw, Lancashire

AMIGA KARATE

To defeat each computer opponent, simply move your character to the right hand side of the screen. Turn so your character now faces the left and go into a crouch. If you position your character so that only his leg is visible when he does a leg sweep, your opponents will just stand still and take the blows. It won't take long to defeat them this way. Don't worry about the stars but you'll still have to smash those 'orrid jars on the higher levels.

ALEXANDER EDMONDS, London

IN THE ARCADES

ROLLING THUNDER

1. Only go through doors which have a symbol of a bullet next to them.
2. Go through the very first bullet door to replenish your handgun ammunition.
3. A machine gun can be found through one of the 'bullet' doors so you should try each one.
4. Fire frugally with the machine gun or you'll waste your ammo.
5. If you should run out of ammo then let loose with knives.
6. Keep jumping on and off the balcony to avoid being shot.
7. Purple hooded baddies only need one shot to kill them whereas Blue and Gold hooded baddies need two.
8. When you arrive at the steps that lead down, you should fall down the first step and shoot once at the man opposite you. Jump off the steps and you will float down to the bottom section of the game.
9. Get past the brown doors by shooting as soon as they open, then crouch and shoot to kill the blue hooded man throwing knives at you.
10. In the tyre section there is a man who is hiding in the third or fourth stack of tyres. Jump forward in between shots until you are next to him then when he pops up, pop him first.
11. Keep moving along the tyres until you are rushed by two men, crouch and fire four times to despatch them.
12. Crouch and shoot to kill the baddie that then fires at you from behind the sandbags, then immediately jump or walk backwards to shoot the chap that's throwing incendiary bombs at you.
13. The final baddie is a doddle. He's a gold character so he'll take two shots. Simply shoot him once and then fire into the air above his head. The fool will jump and try to catch the bullet, getting himself killed in the process. All that remains is to walk through the exit at the end of the scrolling screen and you'll have completed the first level.

Peter Walsh, New Moston

HANG-ON

Never use the brake to slow down, simply release the throttle and you'll slow down just as effectively without skidding.

Richard Hawkins, Woking

SLAP FIGHT

As soon as the game starts, move your ship to the top left corner of the screen and allow yourself to be shot. When you re-start you will be graced with a full set of power wings and guided missiles which should make your task a shade easier.

Scott Petch, Harrowgate and Adrian Goldsmith, Boston

PAPERBOY

Select 'Easy way' and try to survive the first two days. On the Wednesday, when you come to the training course, head along the middle lane at full pelt. As soon as the finish line comes into view you should notice a bush to your right. Quickly change course and head for the bush (still at full speed) and continue toward the fence that is to the right of the finish line. Doing this takes you straight onto another training course where you should take the middle course again. Once you reach the end of the course you will find you can cycle straight through the spectator stand and onto your third training course. Follow the middle lane again and this time come to a halt IN the spectator stand. You now have a score of over a BILLION plus unlimited men for the rest of the game.

Jeremy Walt, Bude

HOT TIPS...HOT PRIZES!!

Every month we give away ££££-worth of software to readers who send in the best playing tips, pokes, maps, and hi-score tactics...

Tip of the month – gets you **six top-rated games** for your machine specially selected by the ACE team **completely free.**

Just in case you're in any doubt about what that could mean, this month **Chris Wild** walks away with free copies of:
SuperSprint, Plexar, Moon Strike, How to be a complete Bastard, Renegade, Tai Pan
That's worth a red-hot **£44.78** for Mr Wild....Aren'cha dying of jealousy?! Better make sure it's YOU next time!

Five runners-up each receive a top-rated game for their machine specially selected by the ACE team.
Alexander Edmonds who will soon be drooling over his free copy of ***Karate Kid II***
T.L. Mensah who'll be racing off with a copy of ***SuperSprint*** (as soon as it's released).
David Marek who will soon be tearing his hair out over ***XOR*** .
Ediz and Robert who get ***Chuck Yeager's Advanced Flight Trainer.***
Richard Mablethorpe who wins ***Skulldiggery.***

...next month it could be **YOU!**

So get down to it! Send your tips to:
Tricks'n'Tactics, Advanced Computer Entertainment, 4 Queen Street, BATH, BA1 1EJ
Don't forget to include your name and address (clearly written ion block capitals) and the name of your computer – so we can pick the right prize!

....and don't forget ARCADE TIPS for those coin-hungry high-street mechanoids. With every Arcade Tip you send in, include the title of the game of your choice and specify your computer – if you're chosen as **Tip of the month** you're chosen game will wing it's way to you absolutely free. This month, **Peter Walsh** is the lucky winner, next month...?

ACE

Collect it!

Missed the first issue of ACE? Don't despair. A copy can be despatched to your letterbox for just £1.50 (postage free). Look at these highlights.

For the...
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Amiga
CBM 64/128
Spectrum
Amstrad
ACE
ADVANCED·COMPUTER·ENTERTAINMENT
GREAT LAUNCH ISSUE!
WHICH CONSOLE?
MUSIC
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- Buyer's Guide describing the ACE all-time top 50 games.
- Large, colour reviews of XOR, Bubble Bobble, Quedex, Impact, Barbarian, Mask and more.
- Which Console? A detailed comparison of the Nintendo, Sega and Atari machines and the software available for them.
- Music. Intro to Midi and a review of Casio's Midi Guitar.
- Great playing tips on Guild of Thieves, Barbarian, Sentinel, Bounder, Defender of the Crown and more.
- Spoof letters page!

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What makes this offer especially remarkable is that the prices we advertise *already represent substantial savings on normal shop prices.* For example our price for software which costs £14.95 in the shops is normally £11.95. So if you subscribe, you can buy one of those games for just £1.95 – that's a total saving of £13!!

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Ocean

Use the combined powers of the bouncing Wizball and Cataball to collect magic water drops. Original and addictive.

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CBM 64 disk	12.95	**10.95**	A109CD
Amstrad cass	8.95	**7.95**	A109AC
Amstrad disk	14.95	**11.95**	A109AD

COMMODORE 64 · 128 DISK
WIZBALL
ocean

S.D.I

Mirrorsoft

Strategic Defence Initiative: action plus strategy.

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Atari ST disk	29.95	**24.95**	A116ST
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You've seen the movie, now plan your own dogfights. One and two-player action.

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IBM/AMSTRAD PC + COMPATIBLES
TOP GUN
ocean

XOR

Logotron

Ingenious maze game, packed with mind-bending puzzles. Original and very compulsive. Ace Rated 927.

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CBM 64 cass	9.95	**7.95**	A119CC
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US Gold/Epyx

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Amstrad disk	14.99	**11.95**	A108AD
Atari ST disk	24.99	**19.95**	A108ST
Amiga disk	24.99	**19.95**	A108AM
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DEATH WISH 3

Gremlin

Clean up the streets in spectacularly violent style with your bazooka, machine-gun, pistols, etc.

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CBM 64 disk	14.99	**11.95**	A103CD
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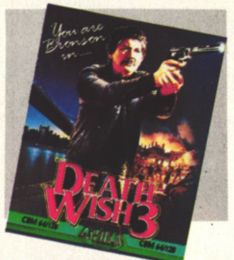

EPYX EPICS

US Gold/Epyx

Collection of four stunning classics: Summer Games, Impossible Mission, Breakdance, Pitstop II.

Version	RRP	ACE price	Order code
CBM 64 cass	9.99	**7.95**	A105CC
CBM 64 disk	14.99	**11.95**	A105CD

TAIPAN

Ocean

Advanced strategy game based on the James Clavell novel.

Version	RRP	ACE price	Order code
Spectrum cass	7.95	**6.25**	A113SC
Atari ST disk	19.95	**15.95**	A113ST

MSX 64K
TAI-PAN
ocean

BALANCE OF POWER

Mirrorsoft

A demanding game of strategy.

Version	RRP	ACE price	Order code
Atari ST disk	29.95	**24.95**	A117ST
Amiga disk	29.95	**24.95**	A117AM

STRIKE FORCE HARRIER

Mirrorsoft

All action flight simulator and shoot-em-up.

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Spectrum cass	9.95	**7.95**	A115SC
CBM 64 cass	9.95	**7.95**	A115CC
CBM 64 disk	14.95	**11.95**	A115CD
Amstrad cass	9.95	**7.95**	A115AC
Amstrad disk	14.95	**11.95**	A115AD
Atari ST disk	24.95	**19.95**	A115ST

MIRRORSOFT
STRIKE FORCE
HARRIER

LEADERBOARD

US Gold/Access

THE golfing simulation bar none.

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Spectrum cass	8.99	**6.95**	A107SC
CBM 64 cass	9.99	**7.95**	A107CC
CBM 64 disk	14.99	**11.95**	A107CD
Amstrad cass	9.99	**7.95**	A107AC
Amstrad disk	14.99	**11.95**	A107AD
Atari ST disk	24.99	**19.95**	A107ST
Amiga disk	24.99	**19.95**	A107AM

MASK

Gremlin

Addictive gameplay based on the TV cartoon.

Version	RRP	ACE price	Order code
Spectrum cass	7.99	**6.25**	A101SC
CBM 64 cass	9.99	**7.95**	A101CC
CBM 64 disk	14.99	**11.95**	A101CD
Amstrad cass	9.99	**7.95**	A101AC
Amstrad disk	14.99	**11.95**	A101AD

MASK
AMSTRAD

GAUNTLET

US Gold/Taito

The arcade smash hit featuring mazes teeming with spooky enemies.

Version	RRP	ACE price	Order code
Spectrum cass	8.99	**6.95**	A118SC
CBM 64 cass	9.99	**7.95**	A118CC
CBM 64 disk	14.99	**11.95**	A118CD
Amstrad cass	9.99	**7.95**	A118AC
Amstrad disk	14.99	**11.95**	A118AD
Atari ST disk	24.99	**19.95**	A118ST

GAME OVER

Imagine

Exciting shoot-em-up featuring huge, evil guardians at the end of each level.

Version	RRP	ACE price	Order code
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CBM 64 cass	8.95	**6.95**	A110CC
CBM 64 disk	12.95	**10.95**	A110CD
Amstrad cass	8.95	**6.95**	A110AC
Amstrad disk	14.95	**11.95**	A110AD

GAME OVER
COMMODORE 64 · 128
Imagine
...the name of the game

SOLOMON'S KEY

US Gold

Wizard coin-op game packed with puzzles and invention.

Version	RRP	ACE price	Order code
Spectrum cass	8.99	**6.95**	A104SC
CBM 64 cass	9.99	**7.95**	A104CC
CBM 64 disk	14.99	**11.95**	A104CD
Amstrad cass	9.99	**7.95**	A104AC
Amstrad disk	14.99	**11.95**	A104AD

HEAD OVER HEELS

Ocean

Exploit the different abilities of two characters in a brain-bending exploration of a stunningly-depicted 3D world.

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SPECTRUM 48 · 128
HEAD OVER HEELS
ocean

DEFENDER OF THE CROWN

Mirrorsoft/Mindscape

Strategy and combat backed by graphics you would not believe!

Version	RRP	ACE price	Order code
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ARKANOID

Ocean

Really enjoyable Breakout clone with 32 levels.

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CBM 64 disk	12.95	**10.95**	A112CD
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Amstrad disk	14.95	**11.95**	A112AD
IBM compatible	19.95	**15.95**	A112PC
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ARKANOID
Imagine
...the name of the game

STAR GAMES 2

Gremlin

A compilation of superb titles including Ball Blazer, Eidolon, Knight Games, Highway Encounter, and Trail Blazer. Stunning value.

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Spectrum cass	7.99	**6.25**	A102SC
CBM 64 cass	9.99	**7.95**	A102CC
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THE BLITTER END...

Cut!

Major "Wild" Bill Stealy of Microprose cuts the cake to celebrate Microprose's first birthday in the UK. You'll notice, however, that the large bottle of champagne has not been opened, despite the plethora of full glasses on the table top. We suspect Major Stealey of keeping a firm hold on company expenditure, which no doubt explains why the anxious chap on the right is quietly trying to get a taste of the icing on his fingertip before the cake is whisked away and the hard tack brought out.

Left Out

An apology is due to Brian Larkman, author of the Graphics Scene feature in our first issue; his name didn't quite make it on to the page alongside his immortal prose. Sorry about that. Brian's a real live artist who's been fascinated by computer graphics for some time – he'll be writing for us regularly in forthcoming issues.

An apology is also due to Audiogenic; their excellent game *Impact* got the treatment in **ACE 1** but the **ACE Rating** seemed a little odd. Again, something was left out - the number **2**. The **ACE Rating** for the game should have been a resounding **927**.

Bubble Bobble Bonus...

You very nearly very lucky blighters! If you own a Spectrum, that is. The five levels of *Bubble Bobble* on this month's cover cassette were almost **the full game!**. Confusion about which master went where and to whom meant that the duplicators came within a hair's breadth of running off thousands of full games, which would then have been generously given away by ourselves to hordes of grateful punters. But our resident boffin, Andy Wilton, saved the day. Bubbling and bobbling away on the 'demo' late one night he noticed that he didn't seem to be stoppping at Level 5. Or 6. Or 7....Frantic phone-calls next morning averted apoplectically red faces being on show. But it was a damn close run thing, Algy.

Next month...

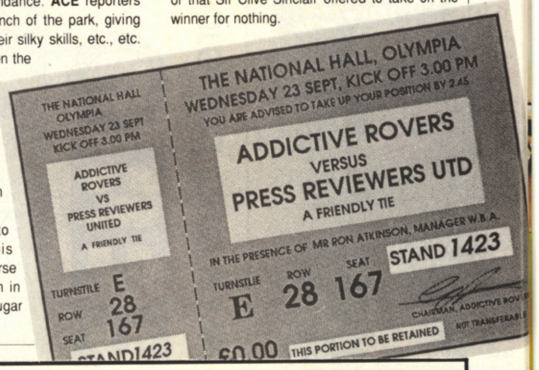
ACE is getting fitter and fatter. Our next bumper issue – on sale November 5th – will have

- An in-depth and vey unusual report on the **PCW Show shenanigans**, including startling details of the software and personalities that really matter
- **Update Anguish** - how to take the pain out of moving up from 8-bit to 16-bit computer entertainment
- **Games of Yore**, or **Did we *really* play them?** We look at the games that use to make our knees tremble; have they still got what it takes?
- **Strategy Games** - Buyers' Guide to the best in megalomania
- **Graphics** - head-to-head review of Amiga stars *Digipaint* and *Deluxe Paint 2*
- **Adventures** - *Yes, Minister*, Level 9's *Gnome Ranger* and - maybe, just maybe - Infocom's yukky-sounding venture in to Mills & Boon territory, *Plundered Hearts*
- **Tricks 'n' Tactics** – how to play and win with *Quedex*, *Red L.E.D.*, *Boulderdash* and *Skulldiggery*
- **Reviews** - even bigger and better section covering all those juicy games competing for your autumnal sovereigns

More balls

Next issue we hope to carry a match report on this exciting event, at which 'Champagne' Ron Atkinson will be in attendance. **ACE** reporters will be covering every inch of the park, giving 110% and displaying their silky skills, etc., etc. but can a match between the press and a software house really be a 'friendly'? Certainly the crowd aren't going to be too happy – it looks as if 13500 people have been given the same seat number!

We look forward to further events of this nature. There is of course absolutely no true truth in the rumour that Alan Sugar and Jack Tramiel have negotiated $1 million in prize-money to appear in a mud-wrestiling bout, or that Sir Clive Sinclair offered to take on the winner for nothing.



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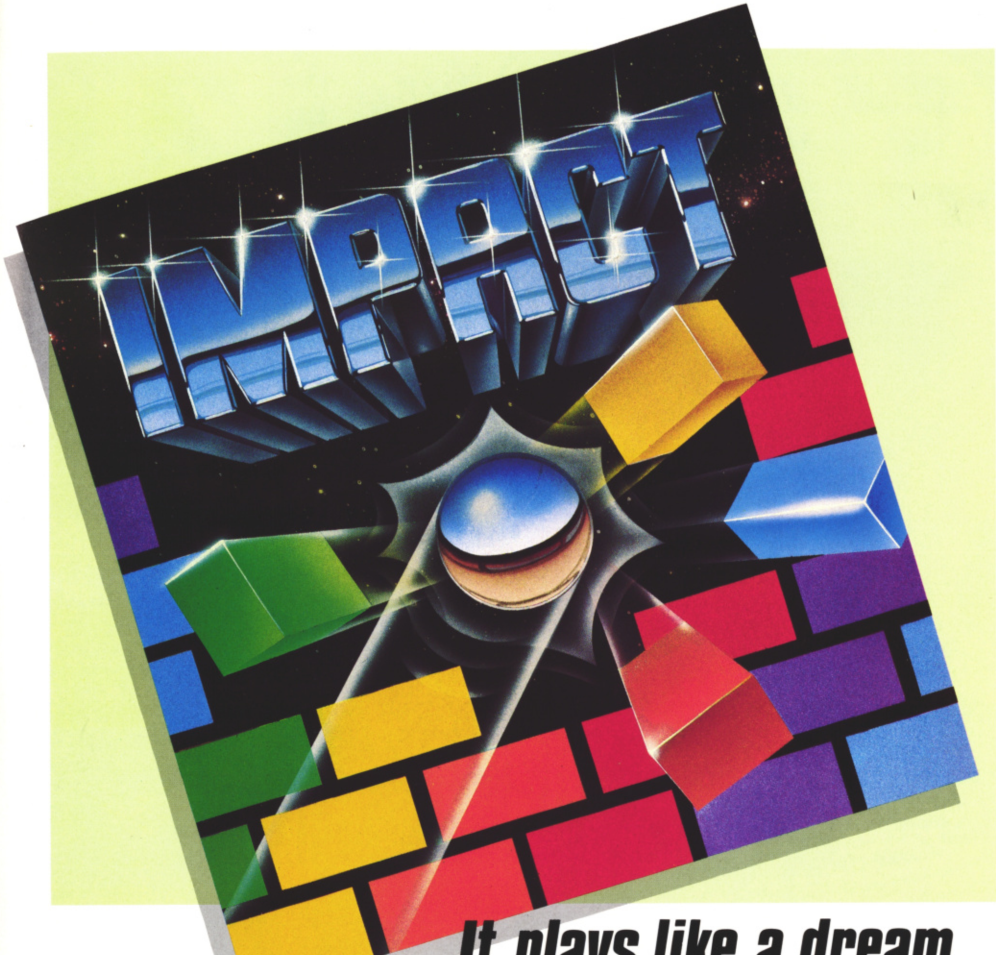
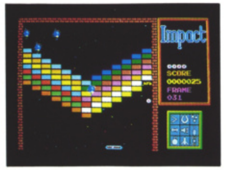
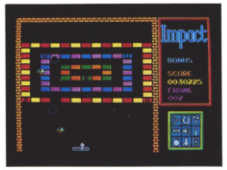
Activision	12-13,94-95
Argus	16
Ariolasoft	6,77
Audiogenic	IBC
Budget	79
CPS	44
Firebird	21,57,78
Gremlin	IFC,3,80
Incentive	99,101
KJC	44
Logotron	72
Martech	48
Mastertronic	85
Microprose	11,37,51,86,93
Mirrorsoft	10
Ocean/Imagine	24,32,43,60,88
Piranha	70-71
Shekhana	76
Systems Architects	28
US Gold	OBC,22-23,64,98
York	44

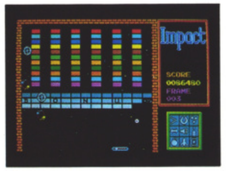


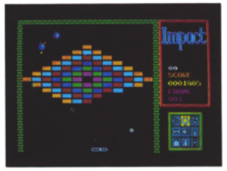
It plays like a dream...
but seems like a NIGHTMARE!

TRAPPED – in a 1970's arcade machine! Every escape route is blocked by a wall of brightly coloured bricks. Powerfully addictive, with 200k of digitized sound, IMPACT has 80 built in screens plus 48 that you can design yourself – as hard, as simple, as much fun as you like. Hidden on each screen are special tokens – catch them if you can. Use them to buy one of nine powerful weapons, or keep them until the end of the screen to score a bonus.









Available now, price £14.95 for Amiga (512k min.) and Atari ST (requires 512k, mouse and colour monitor or TV).
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